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The wisdom of the market

Samuel Brittan

EMMON BUTLER
Hayek: His Contribution to the Political and Economic Thought of our Time
168pp. Temple Smith. £11.95 (paperback, £4). 0851172334

The career of Friedrich Hayek teaches us a great deal about intellectual and academic fashions. During the 1930s he was mainly known for technical economic studies, which were at the time overshadowed by the new Keynesian theories on unemployment and economic policy. In the 1940s he became a hate figure on the Left because of his onslaught on the case for centralized economic planning and his insistence on the links between political and economic freedom in his best-selling *Road to Serfdom*. Then followed decades of neglect, during which his most important constructive works on the foundations of a liberal society were written. Finally, following his Nobel prize in 1979, he emerged as a cult figure of the Radical Right. Many people would say that if Mrs Thatcher is a conviction politician, the convictionists are those of Hayek.

The polarized nature of the response to Hayek has come to me recently in a more personal way. My general attitude has not changed materially since I first started to discuss Hayek's work seriously in the early 1970s. This is that he has gone much more deeply into the links between the market system and personal freedom than most other writers and that he has thrown important light on an enormous range of questions from the rule of law and the danger of elective dictatorship to the methodology of social sciences and the theory of money, but that he has not provided a logically watertight, all-embracing system and that it is possible to learn from his work without accepting all his particular policy views. Yet - depending on my exact order of presentation of this qualified view and the political context of the time - I have been regarded as everything from a card-carrying Hayekian to an implacable opponent of Hayek and all his works.

Emmon Butler should have no such troubles. His book *Hayek* is deliberately expository rather than critical and will provide for many people a workmanlike introduction. There is far more to Hayek than the demolition of socialism and the standard case for free markets, and Butler's readers should obtain an inkling of what that "more" is. Yet I suspect that in presenting Hayek as a revered thinker with a complete system, Butler may be making his work neater, simpler and less interesting than it really is. One suspects that the real Hayek is a much more caustic and iconoclastic person than the public sage.

Hayek is attracted to three different political philosophies: (1) Classical liberalism: that is, liberalism in the old English rather than the American sense, with a strong emphasis on the rule of law, competitive markets and limited government; (2) Burkean conservatism: that is, an emphasis on the superior wisdom of institutions which have developed with time; and a belief that changes should be based on reducing "inconveniences" in current traditions and practices, which themselves supply hints about adaptation to changing circumstances; (3) Evolutionary ethics: this recent addition to Hayek's scheme emphasizes the survival of the fittest, and its development to higher levels, and judges institutions and ideas in terms of social biology.

Occasionally these three different approaches, as in the nostalgic view of Glads-tonian England, may point in a similar direction. Usually, however, they are in conflict. In the USSR, dictatorship and state control embody the traditional wisdom, and proponents of free elections or free markets there could be accused of just that kind of "constructivist rationalism" with which Hayek charges radicals in the West. The co-existence of these three and other disparate elements in Hayek's thought is no tragedy. The interest arises from the very tensions between them.

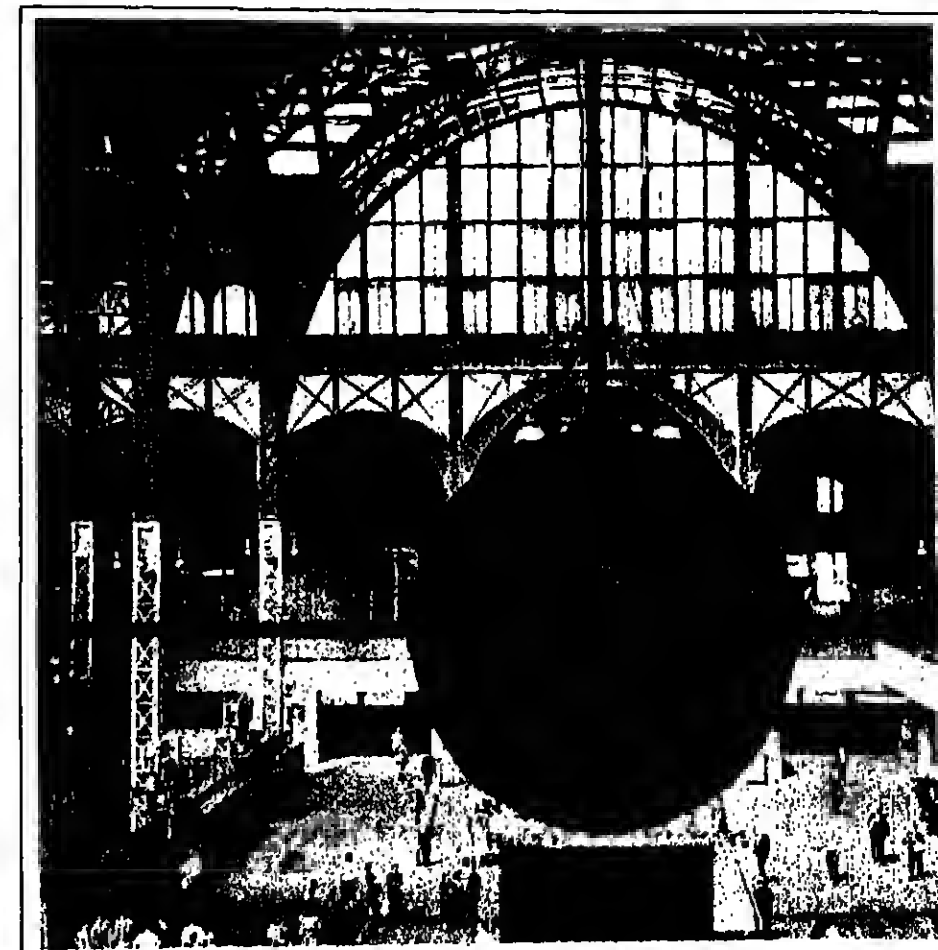
One topic which reveals how radical and unconventional Hayek can be is his approach to the idea that there can be a "just reward" for particular people or occupations, which might eventually be enforced by some ideal income policy. In *The Constitution of Liberty* and his

latest trilogy, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, Hayek denies that there is such a thing as a "just reward" or that people's relative pay should reflect their merit. This has usually been interpreted as an attack on measures to improve the wages of the poorly paid or reduce high salaries and profits. In fact Hayek's attack is directed just as much at conventional defenders of free enterprise who believe that the market wage for a person's services represents his marginal value to society and is therefore just.

So far from being just, market rewards depend, Hayek argues, on an unpredictable mixture of effect, ability and luck. A person is not responsible for his genetic inheritance. Still less is he responsible for the vagaries of the market, which can cause a collapse of the demand for an occupation for which someone has had a life of training. It is fruitless to debate whether truck drivers should receive less than junior college professors as they did before the Second World War, or more, as they do in contemporary America. It is the market, not the merit, that has changed.

fashionable - even ignored - in the 1950s and 60s. At a time when most go-ahead economists were rearing to equip themselves with forecasting models and computer printouts, Hayek seemed an armchair thinker preoccupied with out-of-date ideas such as the limitations of human knowledge and the difficulties that economists would have if they tried to ape the natural scientist. Even today an essay by Hayek is more likely to attract the attention of political theorists or (though Hayek would hate the term) "socialists", than of economists.

But the contrast does not necessarily tell against Hayek. A disadvantage of current methodological orthodoxy is that many economists have acquired a vested interest in the existence of stable, discernible numerical relationships between phenomena such as income and consumption, or short-run changes in the money supply and the price level. One cannot rule out the successful discovery of relationships of this kind; but equally one cannot guarantee it; and it is Hayek who pointed out that scientific method can still be applied in



"Penryn Hall, 1963" by Walker Evans, from Walker Evans at Work (238pp. Thames and Hudson. Paperback £7.95. 0 500 27304 9).

Hayek has two main arguments against attempting to reward merit. First, it is highly inequitable. For if the merit awards of some Income Policy tribunal were different from market valuations, there would be shortages of some workers and unemployment among others - thus aggravating present job shortages which are, as he rightly argues, due to union and other institutional forces pricing workers out of employment. Second, quite apart from the adverse economic consequences, it is not even desirable to try to reward merit on a national scale, which would involve supposing that some authority can decide between how much pain and effort a task has cost and how much of a person's achievement is due to outside circumstances.

Hayek does not even think it rational to strive to be meritorious but rather "to achieve a minimum of pain and sacrifice and therefore a minimum of merit", a heretical observation not, I think, quoted by Butler. But to deny that a person deserves one wage rather than another does not, for Hayek, mean that he should be left to starve if his earning capacity departs. In contrast to some of his supporters Hayek is in favour, not of a minimum wage, but of a minimum income through State transfers to those who would otherwise fall below it. He does not specify the mechanism, but clearly says enough to make Butler feel uneasy.

Here, then, is one example of how far Hayek is from conventional conservative attitudes. A old to his wider importance may be obtained if we look at the reasons why he was so un-

predict certain general features of an interacting system in the absence of specific numerical relationships. Such procedures are commonplace, for example, in biology and linguistics.

Milton Friedman, by contrast, fitted the contemporary mood exactly. Despite the unfashionable nature of his policy views he spoke the same language as the postwar Keynesians, fitted equations to time series and provided a wide new field for economists in the investigation of "demand for money functions", which multiplied enormously their employment opportunities. Indeed, Friedman's contribution was essential. For if age-old verities about the relation between money and prices, or the fullness of nations trying to spend themselves into full employment, were to be rehabilitated, it had to be in modern statistical dress.

But the very modernity of Friedman has meant that he has been vulnerable to new researchers claiming to refute his work by still more up-to-date statistical methods. By contrast Hayek's insistence that, while inflation is a monetary phenomenon, there is no such thing as the quantity of money and no sharp boundary between money and other financial assets has stood the test of time much better. The experience of Mrs Thatcher's government, which overshot his monetary targets by miles in its first couple of years, but nevertheless presided over a sharp fall in the inflation rate, is less puzzling to a Hayekian than a Friedmanite. So, too, is the high unemployment cost of the reduction in inflation, which Hayek has always insisted would be inevitable while labour markets were dominated by union

monopolies, whose influence the Friedmanites have usually played down.

Hayek's defence of the market system is also subtly different from that of many other economists. Whereas mainstream economists have been preoccupied with the optimal allocation of resources in given conditions, Hayek has been concerned with the effect of the market system on the evolution and stability of society. He has been interested in markets as examples of human institutions, like language or law, which have evolved without any conscious plan on anyone's part.

Wants, techniques and resources are not given, he points out, but constantly changing - in part due to the activities of entrepreneurs who open up possibilities which people did not know existed before. The market system is a "discovery technique" rather than a way of allocating known resources among known wants with known techniques. The latter problem could, in principle at least, be solved by computers on the principle that people's preferences should be satisfied in the maximum possible extent for any given distribution of income. No computer can predict, however, the emergence of new knowledge, original ideas, or commercial innovations - and people's reactions to them.

The market also provides a method of coordinating the activities of millions of people and of solving problems without a vast apparatus of political decision and of governmental enforcement. The very existence of this self-regulating system is quite unsuspected by ninety-nine per cent of the population, who assume that we must have a national or international "policy" for energy, jobs, productivity, or whatever other problem hits the newspaper headlines.

The Hayekian approach does not solve all problems. Hayek sees the market network as a gradually evolving social system rather than as a mathematical solution to the problem of resource allocation on the basis of known, certain, and unchanging information. But, like language and law, the transmission and incentive mechanism of the market can be improved. So shifting attention from the static allocation of resources to "the market as a discovery procedure" does not remove the issue of intervention.

Hayek has not, in fact, provided any easily recognizable criteria for identifying state intervention of the harmful type. The free-market arguments in *The Road to Serfdom* were based on the incompatibility of central planning with personal liberty. In subsequent years Hayek has approached the issue indirectly. He has argued, especially in *The Constitution of Liberty*, that the main condition for a free society is what he calls the "rule of law". He certainly does not mean by that that the mere observance by rulers of constitutionally enacted laws is enough. On the contrary he would condemn many perfectly valid legislative acts for being arbitrary, discriminatory, and giving far too much discretion to politicians and officials. By "the rule of law" he means a presumption in favour of general rules and against discretionary power. Hayek attempts to derive not only the fundamental political and legal basis, but also the economic policies, of a free society from this conception.

Hayek is right to emphasize that general rules are an important protection - perhaps the most important single protection - for freedom. However, he often argues as if general laws are a sufficient condition for a free society; and this is mistaken. Many policies involving a high degree of coercion can be imposed by general rules - eg, a ban on the teaching of evolution in the southern states of America, or on any literature or music which flouts the principles of Marxist Leninism in the Soviet Union. There is no one philosopher's stone for minimizing coercion in society.

Moreover, neither Hayek nor anyone else has been able to give a statement of the doctrine of the rule of general laws which will make clear what it implies in particular cases. To say that "laws must not single out named individuals" would not be controversial even among collectivists, and would not be enough to protect us against a great deal of arbitrary legislation. On the other hand, general rules must mention categories: traffic laws deal with motorists, sales taxes make traders liable and so on. Once this is admitted, it is very difficult

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A missionary and her moonings

José Harris

BEATRICE WEBB
Diary, Volume Two, 1892-1905: All the Good Things of Life
 Edited by Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie
 376pp. Virago/London School of Economics.
 £18.
 086068210

The first volume of this new edition of the Passfield diaries (reviewed in the *TLS* on October 15, 1982) left Beatrice firmly thrusting romantic fantasies behind her and setting out on a new career of science and social service as the newly married Mrs Sidney Webb. The present volume carries the Webb partnership up to 1905, and covers the years of the Webbs' research on trade unions, the beginning of their history of local government, their foundation of the LSE and support for the Balfour Education Act, their disillusion with "Progressive" politics and shift to a political strategy of wire-pulling and permeation.

This may sound to many readers like a diet of cold porridge, but such an impression could scarcely be further from the truth. It is a measure of Beatrice's diarial genius that she could infuse the most humdrum situations - breakfasts with trade unionists, interviews with lady factory inspectors, dusty afternoons in provincial libraries - with narrative tension, human drama, and symbolic confrontation between rival abstract ideas. Even when she climbed on to a private soapbox and lectured herself on such questions as "authoritative mental hygiene" or "scientific method as the basis of political action", the result, though sometimes absurd and occasionally horrifying, was never dull.

The latest volume includes unforgettable verbal portraits of the great and the obscure: Lord Rosebery sulking in his tent with "drugged look, heavy eyes and morbid flesh"; the "sad lavender" complexion of a discarded

mistress of Bernard Shaw; Graham Wallis "living in a grey cloudland of dutiful effort"; Beatrice's sister, Blanche Cripps, "too madly noble and nobly mad". The entries abound with striking if somewhat malicious social comment - on Liberal "prigs thrust into office", "Labour men full of gassy optimism", the "slim aristocrats, well-fed and slightly dissipated-looking" of metropolitan Toryism. Even Beatrice's own family did not escape her scalpel; its hard, acquisitive menfold and decoratively idle women were dissected with the cold-eyed clarity of Edith Wharton's *House of Mirrors*. Moreover, although the Webbs perhaps exaggerated their own role in history, there can be no doubt that they were closely involved in many historic movements and public events. Beatrice's journals chronicled these happenings in a way that was unique in late-Victorian and Edwardian history. She was "the Pepps of the nineteenth century", wrote Charles Trevelyan (himself an unwitting victim of Beatrice's mordant pen).

For all its absorbing interest as a political archive, however, the heart of this second volume lies, as with its predecessor, in the unfolding of the inner personality of Beatrice herself. The volume begins with her dedicating herself to Sidney's interests, identifying herself with Sidney's "secular and revolutionary set", and congratulating herself on the safe harbour of a "comradely" marriage. A decade later she was still celebrating the "perpetual honeymoon" of their life together and the ever-strengthening bonds of married love. In all this, however, there was a certain element of whistling to keep up her spirits, for the diaries make it clear that throughout her early married life Beatrice was still tormented by her old demons of unsatisfied religious yearning and sexual passion. Throughout the 1890s her former obsession with Joseph Chamberlain keeps breaking through, in the form of detailed analysis of his character, critical commentary on his demagogic imperialism, and continual re-living of the scattered episodes of their

mutual past. "I wonder that I, a happy wife, should brood over the thought of this day six years ago", she writes in July 1893 on the anniversary of her last meeting with Chamberlain. "Since that day we have not met. But he is always there: year in year out I watch him... as a man he becomes steadily more vulgar; as a politician he becomes more ill-informed. And yet he loses neither his interest, nor his charm, at least not to one of his humble fellows."

As in earlier years she was constantly lapsing into "moonings", "dreaming" and the "dis-eased rumblings" of sexual fantasy - rumblings which were kept at bay by hard work, long holidays, a grateful consciousness of Sidney's patient devotion and "an almost religious sense of my intellectual mission". After eight years of marriage had passed Beatrice was healthier, happier, less morbid than she had ever been before; but then in July 1900 she met Joseph Chamberlain once again on the terrace of the House of Commons.

We looked at each other and I stepped forward and we shook hands. 'I should like to introduce my husband to you' I said... then I... turned to fellow guests and tried hard to make conversation... I felt conscious that all the company became extremely polite and I cursed the fate that brought the casual reopening of the relationship again under the eye of London Society.

The effect on Beatrice of this one brief meeting was traumatic and prolonged. For several years she was "struggling with terrible depression", her mind "a prey to idle chatterings of personal vanity", her imagination "overtaken with a presentiment of disease and death". The diary once again rehearses all the minute details of her past dealings with Chamberlain. She daydreams of lovers and of unborn babies, and her unhappiness manifests itself physically in prolonged attacks of eczema and anorexia. It is accompanied also by a reopening of the cosmic void that had haunted Beatrice as a young woman. The result is a powerful resurgence of her earlier interest in mysticism and sacramental religion. She attends communion

regularly at St Paul's, reads works of theology and the lives of the saints, and seeks the company of modern practitioners of holiness, like Bishop Gore. "The relation of man's mind to the universe" is "constantly present" in her thoughts and she is continually oppressed by "the meaninglessness of life on this miserable planet". None of these thoughts could be shared with Sidney, who sees metaphysics as "leading nowhere and as not capable of what he considers valid discussion". Beatrice was therefore driven back on her diary and on the imaginary Other One with whom she had communed in the days before her marriage; the diary became not merely a record of society and politics, but an impassioned outlet for her secret inner life.

Beatrice's depression of the early 1900s lasted for several years, and traces of the morbid asceticism that accompanied it lasted the rest of her life. By 1903, however, she had begun to piece herself together again by feverish efforts at research and by absorption in the post-Boer War movement for promoting "national efficiency". The mid-1900s was the period of her most celebrated success as a salon-hostess, when Balfours, Asquiths, and politicians of all parties flocked to accept the Webbs' hospitality at 41 Grosvenor Road. (The diary reveals that, contrary to later folklore, they were served with vintage port laid down by Beatrice's father and delicacies sent up by train from the Potter country estates.) We leave Beatrice in a period of political confusion and realignment, when the Webbs felt themselves increasingly out of sympathy with Liberal progressivism, much more in tune with intellectual Conservatives like the Balfours and tough-minded administrative reformers of the Edwardian radical right. It was this connection that was shortly to produce Beatrice's invitation to sit on the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. One waits with speculative anticipation for her next appearance, as authoress of the famous Minority Report and multiarch of the welfare state.

A plea for madness

George Steiner

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON
The Pursuit of the Kingfisher: Essays
 207pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £14.95.
 085635472
 111 Poems
 185pp. Manchester: Carcanet. Paperback.
 £5.95.
 0856354571

Christopher Middleton stands apart. Those who have seen where he lives on the edge of the Texan desert, outside Austin, will know how apt is his self-description: "a scatty hermit feeling out formal relations between cobwebs and starlight". Middleton argues his singularity in respect both of a positive vision and of contraries. Repeatedly, in *The Pursuit of the Kingfisher*, a collection of personal essays and working-papers, he expounds a lost but indispensable ideal:

Once there was a vision, shared by poets and sages... of the world as a great pattern of interlocking depths and surfaces, a continuous physiognomy or semiotic system, from which could be read, with a little luck, much study, and a measure of belief, the features of a divine mind.

Authentic poetry - that of Goethe, Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Mandelstam - "was a minute exegesis of creation, scrupulously composed by one who could believe that he participated in creation's formative processes". In true poetry, as in the Kabbalist's image of the "bursting of the vessels" of creation, there is "the sort of texture which haunts mem-

ory and imagination, gradually, but in bursts, it reveals various 'meanings' when dwell, un-or caught up with - in mind. Actually the lyrical character is an ensemble, a gestalt: the clay around the gold, the vases which enhance the resonance." Pound's *Canto XVII* enacts this gestalt and the "breaking loose of the wild particle" of clairvoyant mystery. Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger are readers of and thinkers on poetry whose perceptions take us deep.

Feeling this way, seeking to articulate such persuasion in his own poetry and prose, Middleton is at odds with what he takes to be the English literary, spiritual climate. The "pure ensemble of the poem can, however, slide the other way - into the somnolent, message-laden rationality, the moralistic slog, of cerebral or literary poetry à l'anglaise". The English scene is one of merely "suave poetry which has been pushed to the margins", as distinct from an "exigent poetry, hard-bitten poetry, which goes to the limits of the conceivable and thus relocates the centre". Its available stylistic options put *suavitas* before magnitude and *sanitas* before "the grand old madness". The inevitable consequence, finds Middleton, is a poetry which only leaves one "psychologically prepared for the next tea party".

A advocacy for "the grand old madness" is, of course, not novel. In different modulations Middleton's plea can be heard coming from, say, Laura Riding, or Robert Graves, or John Cowper Powys, or David Jones. Nor is a sense of debilitating cosiness in English poetry singular to Middleton; the charge comes very near to

being a cliché. And one does not see how it is pertinent to the poetry of Ted Hughes, of James Fenton, of Christopher Logue's lament "Homer", to cite only the most obvious instances. None the less, I find myself generally on Christopher Middleton's side of the argument. His own linguistic range, the severe seriousness of his conception of the role of the poet and of the poet's reader in these "terrible times", his unembarrassed celebration of the visionary, "transcendent" potentialities in art and the imagination, are correctives to the entrenched provincialism of the current English manner. It is salutary to be reminded of the price which literature (and society) pay when "logos and language begin to go their separate ways".

Whoever puts forward the case for illumination and magnitude must win the reader's confidence to a quite exceptional degree. Middleton does not make things easy for those who would trust him. His vocabulary is often forbidding: "semiosis", "exoskeleton", "allo-tropic", "transgenic", "archipelagic" (an epithet intelligible solely to those who recall its presences in Hölderlin), "morphogony". Names of fairly recondite psychologists, psycholinguists, anthropologists, visionaries, cascade. Sometimes a coy pomp intrudes: "I was flying across Texas with CM, the Polish poet; we sat in the front row of the cheaper seats, in 1969" - where reverent recognition of the man behind the initials is solicited. Too often, cardinal points are made coterie by the style and syntax in which they are put:

No: the intertemporality of body and space, mediated by water, has a real weight, to which measured fantastic play may contribute much, but which eludes perfect measurement, because of the Fall of language-mind away from body, on its unpredictable evolutionary track toward consciousness or with it.

Middleton's ideal is that of Goethe's intense yet playful integration of consciousness and the organic, of language and the world, of the down-to-earth and the hermetic. Though, strangely, he omits Auden, on whose poetry

and interpretations of human experience Goethe exercised a vivid influence, Middleton is justified in saying that "the English record is forlorn". But Middleton's own presentation of the "Orphic creed" (one recalls Elizabeth Sewall's sovereign treatment of this great theme) is not one of which Goethe would have altogether approved. There is, in a number of these short papers, a pained and painful irritability: the impression is less one of wholeness than of impatiently assembled bric-à-brac.

Middleton is at his best when he writes as a translator, when he places his own gifts at the exigent service of a master. He reports of Goethe:

A line begins, opens up, closes (with or without rhyme) but no sooner has it closed than it is opening into the next line, in a fugitive instant, pure transition. This shutter-flutter occurs even when the syntax entails complex subordination - those relative clauses, for instance, which in German promise a downward float into closure. What Goethe does is keep the shutterfluttering continuum in motion. There is an urgent forward motion sometimes large like the roll of nattering momentum in Beethoven, sometimes microscopic, as in Goethe's handling of the word 'und' ('and').

This is practical criticism of the finest kind. We find it again in Middleton's close, scrupulously informed reading of syntax and signification in Hölderlin's "Andenken". In French, notably with reference to Baudelaire and Mallarmé, the touch seems less sure. But these several working-papers are invaluable contributions to the very limited (now growing) direct witness from the translator's workshop.

The *111 Poems* are selected from the few books of verse which Middleton has published since 1962. Middleton's characteristic tautness, his sinewy elegance and reach of invocation are amply represented. In one of my favourites, "Untitled", Middleton tells "Of that violence we make what we tenderly do". The immediate context is erotic. But I can think of few more concentrated and haunting formulations of this poet's craft, most especially when he is a translator.

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new left review

Clinging and contending

Victoria Glendinning

SYBIL OLDFIELD
Spinsters of This Parish: The Life and Times of F. M. Mayor and Mary Sheepshanks
 328pp. Virago. Paperback. £5.95.
 0860683915

The two spinsters in this book were friends - they met at Newnham - but not intimates; and Sybil Oldfield, who had planned a biography of F. M. Mayor, only began investigating Mary Sheepshanks on discovering that she had moved into Miss Mayor's house after the latter's death. Neither of these "forgotten" women on her own could have commanded much more than specialists' attention today, but taken together they make a valuable study in social and psychological contrasts.

Both were born in 1872, and the late-Victorian family, in its contradictory aspects, dominates Mrs Oldfield's book. Mary Sheepshanks was one of the seventeen children of a poor clergyman in a Liverpool suburb. Mother broke into "terrible fits of crying" with each new pregnancy, and the children, like rats in a crowded cage, turned on one another. Mary, plain and over-tall and the eldest girl, suffered most from the sadistic teasing, and cut away from them all as soon as she got to Cambridge.

Flora Mayor's experience was different. Her father was a prosperous cleric; a professor at King's College, London; the family lived in high bourgeois comfort in Kingston-upon-Thames. Flora was one of twins; she was the clever twin, and while she was at Cambridge her beloved Alice stayed at home, bogged down in those long meals, short walks, handicrafts and good works that made life for an adult daughter at home little more than an indefinitely protracted childhood. Flora wrote to her every day, passing on every complaint she received ("Miss Dant remarked that I have by far the prettiest figure in the whole college"); after Cambridge, she having decided to go on to the U.S.

Her theatrical career was undistinguished, and the life of thirty she was to lead

proposal of marriage from a young architect, Ernest Shepherd. Alice was desolated at the prospect of being separated from her sister, and Flora, though she loved Ernest, put all her energies into persuading him to take on Alice as virtually a member of the wedding. For Alice's sake, she put the marriage off for six months - and in the interim, Ernest died. Flora and Alice were never parted again. Mrs Oldfield makes no judgment on the familial clinging; in this she proves to have not only a sense of history, but considerable charity. In opposite ways, the experience of Mary Sheepshanks and of Flora Mayor as girls exposes the myth, if myth there still remains, of Victorian family life.

One of Flora Mayor's brothers was an unsuccessful housemaster at a public school, a dour and repressed chap for whom the ageing twin sisters kept house until he married. Although Flora was, in theory, a suffragist; she and Alice grew more rigidly conservative and traditional in their attitudes as time passed. Yet there was more to Flora than this; she wrote novels that brought her acclaim in her day, two of which, *The Third Miss Symonds* and *The Rector's Daughter*, have stood the test of time. These novels, which exalted with an unusual insight and candour the inner lives of women deprived of sensual or occupational fulfilment, are what drew Mrs Oldfield to write F. M. Mayor's life.

Mary Sheepshanks wrote to Flora Mayor in appreciation of *The Rector's Daughter*. Her own personality was at times very like that of her friend's fictional spinster - lonely, self-pitying, garrulous, defensive; but her achievements in the public arena were impressive. She left Cambridge with "advanced views" and plunged into social work in London. She became vice-principal of the new Morley College, and her active suffragist interests led her into the international women's movement and worldwide speaking tours. A combative pacifist, she was hotly involved in the pacifist "patriot" split in the movement in the First World War. She pioneered aid for refugees, and later became a committed and controversial secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Mrs Oldfield meshes the careers and experience of the two women, and spotlights their inherent weaknesses, deriving in each case from the family situation: Flora's almost exclusive emotional dependence on her small family circle could blind her to the fellow-humanity of those who were not Mayors, while Mary's sense of isolation from her huge family caused a predisposition in her at times of crisis to treat her later alternative families of friends as yet more hostile brothers and sisters against whom she had to wage a private war.

That is good; and this well-documented book is good, though a little over-weighty in tone. Mrs Oldfield has the habit of backing up her own insights with quotations: Dr Johnson, Karl Jaspers, Blake, Cowper, E. E. Moore, Jane Austen, Pascal, Virginia Woolf, Schiller and Rousseau are all summoned up to lend their supporting voices.

Mary Sheepshanks lived on until 1958. Then her daily help gave notice and, "very acutely blind and paralysed, but competent to the end", she killed herself. A spinster's death, perhaps. Today's unmarried woman rarely has the choice between doing nothing, like Alice Mayor, and working. And if nowadays we were to hear of a well-bred woman who writes successful novels, or of another woman who is prominent in social administration, and women's politics, we would not accessarily presume that either was unmarried, or even childless. Marriage has become a context, not a condition: in that sense, we are all spinsters now.

Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past, seven essays edited by Patricia H. Labalme and inspired by the tercentenary of the first doctorate in philosophy awarded to a woman, Elena Coraoro, in 1678, has now appeared in paperback (188pp. New York University Press. \$17; 0 8147 5007 9). The essays include "The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact, and Fantasy" by Joan M. Ferrante, "Learned Women in the Europe of the Sixteenth Century" by Roland H. Balinton and "Women as Historical Writers, 1400-1820" by Natalie Zemon Davis.

Jeremy Adler

RAINER MALKOWSKI
Zu Gast
 80pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM18.
 351804982
GERALD ZSCHORSCH
Klappmesser
 79pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM18.
 351804990

The legacy of German Romanticism seemed to polarize after 1900 into poetry obscure and poetry plain; into the words of the sibyls (from *Tralala*) and of the salesmen (Brecht & Co.). Recent German verse often tries to reconcile these extremes in laconic pathos.

Rainer Malkowski came to poetry from advertising. His fourth collection continues on the lines first laid out in *Was für ein Morgen* (What a Morning) of 1975. The best poems there distilled the everyday into images, like a game of ducks and drakes in "Kiesel" ("Little Stones"), and imbued it with mournful reflectiveness. Perhaps it was inevitable that Malkowski should fall temporarily under the spell of Rilke. *Vom Rüssel ein Stück* (A Piece of the Fuzzle) of 1980 contained rather too many images from Rilke's "inner space", and moved uncertainly between intellectual pathos and melancholy affirmation.

Part One of the new volume offers a variety of poems on death, writing, memory and small perceptions. Once again, a dead-pan profundity appears in the banal, as in "The Film":

Warum keine Aufnahme auf dem Film war,
 verstanden wir nicht.
 Auch der Fotogrinder
 wusste keine zweifelsfreie
 Erklärung.

Schwarze
 Trophäe

(We could not understand / Why there was no picture / Even the dealer / Didn't know / An unequivocal explanation / Black / Prophecy.)

Some of the best poems consist entirely of such epigrammatic observations. The technique produces a balky-like accuracy in "Nocturnal Boredom": "The nails of my crooked fingers / Look at me / Like the blind", or even a kind of micro-folk-song, after Rimbaud's "Voyelles", in "With a Twig in the Snow":

Part Two is about Rome. Some of the poems are fairly poor, they range from the chic imagery of a Hockney figure dressed minutely in the Christian name, "Emilio's Guest", to the avowal of the author's own bad conscience

in "Frutta? Dolce?" An underlying sense of alienation finally gets worked out in "At the End of the Plank" which evokes a typical tourist and confronts the image anew in the poet's memory. Such double exposure produces some fine effects. It is fitting that one poem should recall an ode by the originator of this device: "Bright, Motionless Night" clearly echoes Klopstock's famous "Summer Night". The collection ends with the longest and strongest piece: "My Rome" is almost a liturgical meditation, alternating pictures of the outer worlds with self-analysis: "Why can't I believe / That I am what I see?"

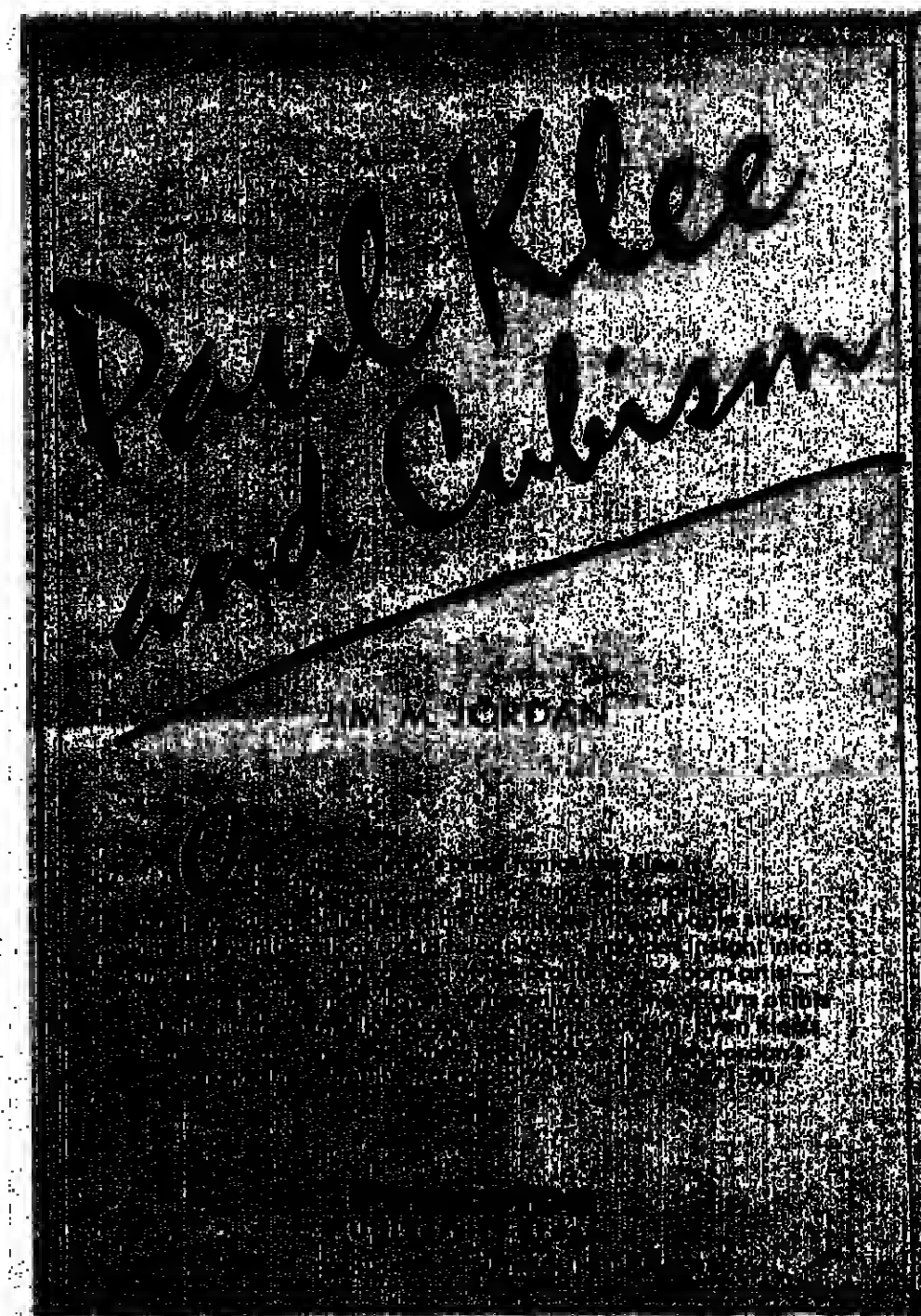
Gerald Zschorsch has also found a kind of dual vision. But his style is tougher, like the flick knife of his title. Yet if Zschorsch now poses as an intellectual hoodlum, real fighting has gone on backstage. For he belongs to the growing band of expatriate East Germans who must begin again in the West, and this has meant finding a new persona. He has done so without publicizing the struggle, and by seemingly dropping the *raison d'être* of his work. However, he has only replaced his overt political references with a more general activism.

Zschorsch's earlier books (published by Andreas Mytze's enterprising Verlag Europäische Ideen) directly reflected his experiences of repression: at seventeen, when he was put into "borstal" for one-and-a-half years after protesting over the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia; and at twenty, when he went to jail for another two-and-a-half years. His documentary prose silences the critic. His protest songs are in the best tradition of Brecht and Biermann.

Zschorsch's new volume contains the familiar mix of prose and verse, but with a new density and ambiguity. The *leitmotiv* "red" may be the party, blood, death, life, or just irresolvable; while "Hymne" recalls an anthem both political and religious. The poems are tightly compacted, often using rhyme, half-rhyme and a technique of heavily punctuated statement: full-stops break up the lines, splitting and snapping to their meanings. More than a manner, a colloquial voice acts as a switchblade to trick language into a world of heightened fact, as in "The Truth is concrete":

Joh. bin. Ich war. Ich werde sein.
 Gedicht. Text. Reim.
 Und manchmal Bombe. Und Schuss: Der Stein zum Schluss.

(I am: I was. And I will be. / Poem. Text. Rhyme. / And sometimes bomb. And shot. And stone. The lot.)



Handwritten text in the right margin: "Klee Poetry Criticism" and "Gerald Zschorsch".



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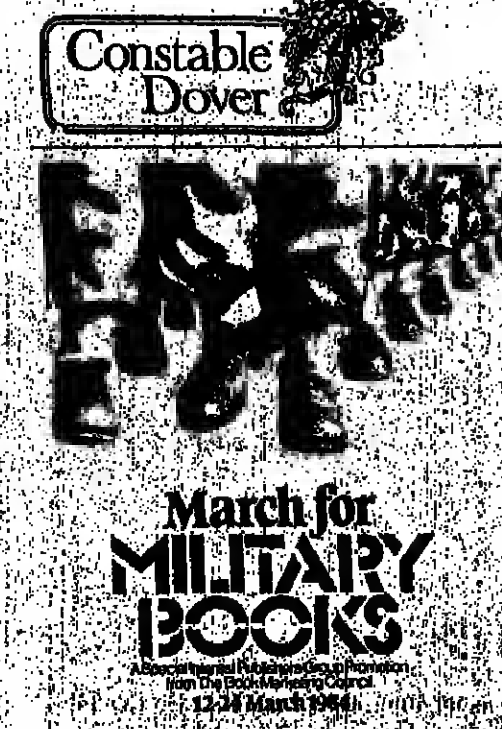
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Living by numbers

James Kirkup

IAN BURUMA
A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and villains of Japanese culture
242pp. Cape. £9.95.
0 224 02049 8

In a traditional Japanese room, a doll's house-sized *psyche* stands on the tatami floor. One has to kneel before it to arrange one's hair or apply make-up. But when it is not in use, it is discreetly veiled with a piece of brocade. Ian Buruma removes that cloth and lets us take a good hard look at what lies behind.

The Japanese are the world's most self-centred people. Buruma gives several examples of this national sport of navel-contemplation, from the *Nihonjiron* ("Theory of the Japanese") hooks proliferating today to the almost total indifference of the Japanese government and people to the fate of the Indo-Chinese refugees washed up on their shores. He cites Japan's geographical isolation, remote and detached, laid aslant as if dissociating itself from the rest of the globe. Long periods of cultural and social isolation until the dawn of the Meiji Era also contributed to that withdrawn quality that persists even today, when despite (or perhaps because of) the ease of jet travel the Japanese are becoming less and less international and the jingoistic "We Japanese" spirit is ever stronger. The Japanese are able, as Buruma shows, to suppress their own feelings, with a single-mindedness that means "a total disregard of other people's feelings too, resulting in a kind of supreme selfishness".

Buruma relates this almost infantile egotism to myths of the creation of Japan, and in particular to the character of Susanoo, the Wind God, brother of the Sun Goddess. But Susanoo had no wish to be separated from his divine mother, and howled and screamed just like the spoilt children of Japan's over-indulgent "smothering mothers" or *kyoiku mammas* (education-mad mammas), today. Japanese

children, especially boys, are fatally indulged and pampered by their mothers, to compensate for the frequent absence of fathers on company business or salarymen drinking bouts. When these children are shoved out into the real world, the shock is traumatic, and this at least in part contributes to those modes of behaviour that to the Westerner often seem either quaint or excessive. Compared with European adults, many Japanese seem immature or lacking in seriousness.

Again and again Buruma returns to a theme in which "universal" and "unique" are contrasted. Writing of the sexual frustrations and uninhibited sexual fantasies of Japanese life, Buruma says: "Many of these fantasies are universal, but the limitless energy and the innocent openness with which the Japanese try to fulfil them is perhaps unique in the world." It is not only sex that is pursued with single-minded intensity: nearly everything, from learning the violin to assembling a car, can be said to be done by numbers: no wonder the Japanese are becoming the lords of the Computer Age. Numbers keep even the wildest fantasies under tight control, and the human being responds like a strictly-programmed cartoon robot, whether in the language lab or on the tennis-court.

A Japanese Mirror is cleverly arranged to lead us from the first Japanese gods and their exploits – so often reminiscent of Greek mythology – to those "heroes and villains", the gods of the present. The first part of the book is about women – the eternal mother complex, marriages of love or convenience, woman as a destructive sexual demon, Turkish bath girls and prostitutes. The final sections are about men – the samurai spirit, *yakusa*, inadequate fathers, *nihiriso* (fake-macho) feminists, and idols of the screen. In between we have an exemplary chapter on "The Third Sex" – male and female homosexuality, transvestism on stage and in the streets, the kitsch-comp of the Takarazuka Young Girls' Opera Company, the ambiguous sexuality of *bishonen* ("pretty boy") comics, intended for

adolescents but often eagerly devoured by adult males.

The various arts of *kabuki* are related to prostitution in all its ever-changing forms: "Adonis Bars" or "Host Bars" for sex-hungry housewives, where some university students earn their tuition fees; *nopon* coffee-shops where the girls wear no panties but raffie their used ones to customers. The Turkish baths offer unlimited amenities, in which the men are passive, bathed and mothered by attendants dressed as nuns or schoolgirls in gym-tunics or nurses who dress their clients in nappies.

Pornography of a peculiarly witless and therefore boring kind can be found everywhere, even in vending machines on street corners. The great book centre of Kanda in Tokyo has many "Adult Book" stores, always packed with frustrated students and salarymen. Young men today are often afraid of big, mature women, so the term "Ranite Cumipurekkusu" has been coined for nationwide adoration of girl singers with no voice dressed in baby-doll costumes (and their male equivalents) called *aidoru* ("idols") – yet another example of the hideous abuse of English that assails the eye and the ear everywhere in Japan. As Gide said: "We wholly conquer only what we assimilate", and this is how the Japanese, notoriously poor at English, are assimilating and conquering the West. But they also have *haragei* or silent speech, which they claim no foreigner can understand: to a Westerner, they seem merely to be giving each other "old-fashioned looks", and it reminds me uncomfortably of Orwell's "bellyfeel".

"Nothing reflects less than a mirror", wrote Cocteau, and this is very true of Japanese mirrors, but never of Buruma's sharp, unsparring reflections on the underside of Japanese society, the exact opposite of Lafcadio Hearn's dreamy aestheticism, which is the way "We Japanese" would like us to see them. *A Japanese Mirror* and not the standard guide-books, is what the tourist who wants to see the real Japan – "through the looking-glass" as it were – should pack in his flight-bag.

In the aristocratic repertoire

Richard Widdess

ELIZABETH J. MARKHAM
Salbara: Japanese Court Songs of the Heian Period
Volume 1 (Text), 410pp. 0 521 24583 4
Volume 2 (Music), 388pp. 0 521 24584 2
Cambridge University Press. £25 each.

The student of early music who opens the second of these two volumes may well be astonished at the musical treasure-trove he discovers: fifty-six secular songs, transcribed from twelfth-century manuscripts, with parts set out in score for voice, clapper and two stringed instruments. The song-texts comprise a well-known literary genre, and there is documentary record of performances of the songs, by named performers, from as early as the year 859; indeed the score provides, for many of the songs, alternative versions, preserved in the same twelfth-century manuscripts, representing variant performance traditions. For all the songs, the score shows precise rhythm and text-underlay, fully written-out ornamentation, and idiomatic writing for the stringed instruments. In a European context, any one of these features would suffice to mark the repertoire as unusually important for the history of secular music; in addition, the attractive melodic idiom, and the high degree of notated detail, would commend the songs to any ensemble specializing in the performance of medieval music.

In fact, the songs in question were composed and sung not in Paris or Provence, but at the Heian court of Japan (782-1184). *Salbara* denotes a genre of refined, elegant and (as it turns out) melodious Japanese court song, performed for entertainment by noble amateurs – such as the famed but fictional Prince Genji. Six of the songs are still sung today. In her historical study of *Salbara*, the first in English, Elizabeth J. Markham achieves two previously unattained objectives: she reconstructs and interprets the melodic lines to which the songs were

sung in Heian times, using the earliest sources available; and she demonstrates the processes of musical change that have rendered the six surviving songs almost unrecognizable as they are performed today. She incidentally demonstrates – as her teacher Laurence Picken has already shown in his *Music from the Tang Court* (1981) – that the archives of Japan are burgeoning with historical musical documents. This fact has yet to be appreciated by the majority of Western musicologists.

Dr Markham's first volume is an exemplary exercise in rigorous scholarly detective-work. In interpreting tablatures for lute (*biwa*) and zither (*gaku-so*), and reconstructing vocal parts with the help of singers' text-copies, she accepts the hypothesis first proposed by Dr Picken, that the speed of performance 800 years ago was much faster than today. Her transcriptions support, indeed confirm the hypothesis, for not only are they entirely convincing as music at the speed proposed, but they also show, for the first time, the close similarity between *Salbara* and certain melodies of the contemporary instrumental repertoires – *Togaku* ("Chinese" music) and *Konjaku* ("Korean" music). This sharing of melodies between instrumental and vocal repertoires of supposedly different origins is clearly indicated in the Japanese sources, but no scholar, Japanese or Western, has previously been able to demonstrate it, for the relationship only fully emerges when all the sources are interpreted according to the "Picken hypothesis".

In the course of Markham's study, it becomes increasingly evident that the compiler of the instrument part-books, Fujiwara no Moronaga (1137-1192), ranks among the greatest of medieval music-scholars: for his part-books are nothing less than a comprehensive and critical edition of the twelfth-century court-music repertoire. His alternative versions and countless variant readings – many of them attributed to named manuscripts or performers – give a vivid picture of a living, orally-transmitted performance tradition, and provide fascinating evidence for the processes by which such a

tradition is reduced to writing. Students of plainsong and medieval European secular monody should take note of this important parallel.

The last and longest chapter examines in detail the relationship between the twelfth-century versions and modern performance practice (how many studies of medieval European music are able to show any continuity between then and now?) Markham discovers that the manifold reduction in tempo has resulted in an effluence of majestic melismas in the vocal line, under the influence of extraneous chant, such that these originally exuberant features have now become "the melody". The modal and rhythmic structures have also become distorted. While these complex and remarkable musical changes are clearly demonstrated, it is perhaps here that one misses most sense of the cultural background to the tradition. On the penultimate page, for example, one learns that "the performing tradition of *Salbara* is reported to have been lost completely between the early sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries"; one would like to know by whom, and in what circumstances, the tradition was lost and, a century later, reconstructed. To say this, however, is not so much a criticism of the present book, as a suggestion for the next. Markham amply demonstrates, in her final chapter, the truth of Jonathan Condit's statement (originally made with reference to Korean music) that "in cultures relying on aural transmission of music, a piece can undoubtedly be preserved in the performing repertoire for a period of several centuries, but the assumption that a piece has remained unchanged for such a period should be viewed with skepticism".

Salbara is photographically reproduced from the author's beautifully-prepared typescript and music manuscript. One hopes that libraries will appreciate the importance of a book that, because it deals with non-Western music, would not normally come to the attention of the wider musical readership that it eminently deserves.

Defence and deterrence

Philip Towle

PAUL BRACKEN
The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces
252pp. Yale University Press. £14.95.
0 300 02946 2

MICHAEL SHEEHAN
The Arms Race
242pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson. £16.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0 85520 630 6

MICHAEL HOWARD
Nuclear Weapons and the Preservation of Peace
15pp. Liverpool University Press. Paperback, £1.
0 85323 005 6

DAVID MARTIN and PETER MULLEN (Editors)
Unholy Warfare: The Church and the Bomb
247pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM
The Nuclear Future
133pp. Cornell University Press. £17.
0 8014 1619 1

From Alexander Solzhenitsyn to Robert McNamara, from General Bernard Rogers to Jean Rudderock the cry goes out that we should emphasize our conventional forces at the expense of our nuclear weapons. Have we then reached another stage in the process by which nuclear weapons have gradually been edged off the centre of the military stage? Up until the Korean War there was a probability that such weapons would be used in any major conflict in which a state possessing them was involved. But they were not used in Korea even when United Nations forces were being defeated. Paul Bracken in *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces* argues that this may have been partly due to chance: they were simply not available at the appropriate time and place. Nevertheless Korea was a portent; the Great Powers have become steadily less likely to use nuclear weapons unless their vital interests, and perhaps their national survival, were at stake. Western military strategy has moved from "massive retaliation" to "flexible response", thus pushing nuclear weapons out of the front line: and those who argue for a "no first use" declaration, for massive increases in Western conventional forces or for removing tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, hope to push this process further in the same direction.

The tendency in much recent writing about strategy is accordingly to assume that anything which emphasizes the conventional element at the expense of the nuclear must be desirable. Commenting on the possible cancellation of the American B1 strategic bomber, Michael Sheehan in *The Arms Race* argues "there is no doubt that such a move would be immensely valuable. America's [conventional] forces, despite the huge amounts spent on them, suffer from many weaknesses." Similarly he opposes the purchase of Trident submarines by Britain since "weaker British forces would give way faster on the European central front, forcing decision makers to 'go nuclear' even sooner". And in his Eleanor Rathbone Memorial Lecture Michael Howard contends: "as for the Europeans, our first requirement is to ensure that our conventional defences are strong enough to deter the Soviet Union from contemplating attack even if she did not fear retaliation with nuclear weapons, and to cease to rely for our safety on a threat which, if ever it came to the point, we would almost certainly never dare to implement."

Some of the contributors to *Unholy Warfare* would agree with this analysis, if they were not against all weapons of any sort, Tony Benn apparently believes that nuclear weapons make war more likely though he does not explain why, and E. P. Thompson naturally condemns any reliance upon nuclear weapons. However, Sir Neville Mott argues that "if Europe is to be defended, planning must be for conventional defence, but... NATO should keep substantial deterrent, to be used only if the other side crosses the nuclear divide". Against this Sir Hugh Beach points out that it is most unlikely that the Europeans will spend more on their conventional forces and that even if they did, the Soviets could easily increase their forces to match.

On the other hand it might be false to assert, as some do, that a conventional war between

East and West would necessarily be more destructive than the Second World War. It might indeed be so but it is by no means certain. Modern warfare is increasingly a battle between rival technologies with fewer and fewer men in the front line. Weapons are becoming much more accurate, though it is also fair to say that certain types of weapons, such as fuel-air explosives, are becoming ever more devastating. The present popularity of defence over deterrence, of conventional forces over nuclear is nevertheless surprising. Deterrence was first espoused by British governments of the 1930s, partly because of the horrific memories of the First World War and partly because the development of bombers promised to make future wars even less attractive, particularly to civilians. Deterrence is in fact the strategy of a profoundly pacifist population.

The central issue, however, is not whether conventional war would be destructive but whether it would lead to a full-scale nuclear exchange. The heart of much of the recent debate is the question whether by changing to a more conventional strategy we increase the risks that an East-West war might break out, without reducing the risk that it would end in nuclear disaster. The paradox is that many of those who profess to be particularly concerned about the instability or immorality of deterrence often implicitly assume that it would continue to preserve the peace even if it were made radically less effective by "no first use" declarations or by massive one-sided reductions in nuclear forces. Conversely those (like this reviewer) who believe that deterrence has been a great stabilizing influence since 1945 often oppose anything which might weaken the strategy in however small a way. On the side of

caution we can argue that contemporary strategists have a duty to be conservative. The onus must be on the reformers to prove that any change will not be destabilizing.

Those who argue for reduced reliance upon deterrence tend to believe that the situation is becoming ever more dangerous, that the arms race is "out of control". Michael Sheehan's wide-ranging and dispassionate description of *The Arms Race* provides some material for assessing the alarmists' contentions. Sheehan demolishes the frequently heard argument that all arms races end in war, although he is slightly more inclined than I am to accept the idea that we are in the middle of such a race. He asserts, for example, that "the real acceleration in the strategic nuclear arms build-up has occurred since 1960". In terms of missiles and missile warheads this is of course true, but in terms of nuclear destructive power, of "throw weight" in the strategists' jargon, Western power has been reduced as the bombers have been phased out. Taken as a whole, the period since the Korean War has seen a steady fall in the number of tanks, aircraft, ships and men in uniform in the forces of the Great Powers. The arms race, if there is one, is in the technical complexity and cost of the weapons and in the level of training of the forces which man them. Hence the paradox that senior officers bemoan the erosion in the size of their forces, while critics attack the "waste of resources" on military expenditure.

Over the past few years Michael Mandelbaum has become one of the most respected historians of the nuclear era. In *The Nuclear Future* he argues that the present protest movements are a result of the Reagan administration's policy and more generally of a collapse of

faith in the "nuclear priesthood", those in strategic institutes and ministries of defence who have been thinking about nuclear problems since 1945. In the long run, he believes, the "peace" movements will decline and "the nuclear future will be like the past. It will follow a middle path between nuclear war and nuclear disarmament. There will continue to be nuclear weapons but they will not be used."

Paul Bracken's fascinating and disturbing study of *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces* is less optimistic. Bracken believes that insufficient attention has been devoted to the management of nuclear forces in crises between the Great Powers. He argues that the arms control negotiations should be designed to enhance stability in such crises. The right to place Soviet Yankee Class submarines off the coast of the United States or Western Pershing 2 missiles in West Germany should be barred away because these deployments threaten national command centres and thus reduce the time available for governments to take calm and rational decisions. The United States should declare unilaterally that it would not attack Soviet command centres in wartime and it should offer help and advice to the Kremlin whenever it perceives inadequacies in the control of Soviet nuclear forces. Whatever the merits of Bracken's individual recommendations, his proposal that we should concentrate on improving "crisis stability" could achieve a degree of consensus which efforts to push nuclear weapons ever further from the centre of the military stage cannot do, given the fears that these might weaken deterrence and foster the delusion that such weapons would definitely not be used in a full-scale East-West war.

On the other side

Michael Carver

ANDREW COCKBURN
The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine
338pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 09 151290 5
VIKTOR SUVOROV
Inside the Soviet Army
296pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 10889 6

The reader who seeks the truth about just how serious is the threat from the large armed forces of the Soviet Union to the security of the capitalist West will be as confused, after reading these two books, as he probably was before.

Andrew Cockburn at least has a clear idea of the message he wishes to put across. It is, first, that the Soviet armed forces are riddled with inefficiencies of every kind; and, second, that they and the armed forces of the United States and her allies are engaged in a conspiracy of exaggerating the threat from each other in order to justify the maintenance and improvement of the existing levels of armed strength. The sources from which he derives the evidence for these assertions include Viktor Suvorov's previous book *The Liberators* (which had as its subtitle the title of his new volume), from which Cockburn quotes extensively. Soviet citizens who have left their country and now live in the US are another favourite source. Contacts with the intelligence world, including informants who have retired from it, with the military in general, perusal of military literature and a keen nose for any scrap of information that can land support to his argument, are all brought into play.

One of Cockburn's most persistent themes is that the technological competition between the two superpowers, far from enhancing the efficiency of their forces, reduces it, particularly in the case of the Soviet Union. He maintains that modern equipments are much less reliable than their less sophisticated predecessors, and quotes the American M1 and Soviet T64 tanks, as especially bad examples. In this argument, he fails to make allowance for the fact that all new equipments have teething troubles, which are ironed out when they have been in service for some time.

As an example of the effect one-sided equipment programme has on the other, Cockburn

quotes Herbert York, who held important posts in the Pentagon connected with the development of the US strategic nuclear weapon arsenal:

"The Russians today have a strategic force of roughly 2400 missiles and bombers. The reason they have that many is because that is the number we planned to build in the early 1960s, when our present force was laid down, and they have simply copied it. The reason we decided on that number at that time was because we were changing over from a strategic force (composed purely) of bombers, and we couldn't have proposed to replace it with anything smaller. The reason we had [that number of] nuclear bombers in the 1950s was because the force had been based on the number of bombers we had for attacking the enemy in World War II. That number had been determined by the number of planes we could build in the war years, the number of crews we could train in that time, the number of airfields we could maintain overseas, and so on. It does not seem such a rational basis for planning Soviet strategic forces."

If Cockburn's book is to be believed, similar reasons lie behind most of the military planning of both superpowers.

No such clear message emerges from the new book by the author who goes by the pseudonym of Viktor Suvorov. The last part of it echoes the message which he broadcast so vividly and wittily in *The Liberators*: that the Soviet armed forces are afflicted with the same diseases that corrupt the whole Soviet system, deriving from the unholy triangle at the top. There, the Party, the Army and the KGB do not trust each other for one moment. Two of them will always combine to see that the third does not gain excessive power. Because merit cannot be rewarded, advancement depends on flattery of one's superiors and concealment not only of one's own mistakes but also of those of one's subordinates. This is a major source of inefficiency and corruption, which applies across the board: to generals, to all areas of the equipment procurement and maintenance system, to training, supply and administration of every kind, including discipline.

The Liberators depicted the Soviet Army as a drunken, discontented rabble. In which all ranks are up to every old soldier's trick of cheating superiors and taking advantage of their comrades. Suvorov's new book reflects this in a minor key; but most of it is taken up with a standard description of the organization of the Soviet armed forces. The picture that he paints is a very different one: of huge forces, lavishly equipped, organized, and trained to implement an offensive strategy designed to

overrun Western Europe. Concealment of the real intentions of the Soviet Union is directed by the Chief Directorate of Strategic Deception, which was formerly headed by the present Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov. According to Suvorov, every act and word of all Soviet officials is influenced by this deception plan. All their international sportsmen and women are members of their special forces.

The overall conclusion that emerges from Suvorov's book is a confused one, which does not support Cockburn's. Cockburn may perhaps suspect that Suvorov, who has been lecturing to the US armed forces about the Soviet army, has become infected by his own desire to ensure that the Soviet threat is taken seriously. It could be that Suvorov realized that too ready an acceptance by people like Cockburn of the picture painted in *The Liberators* distorted the truth, and detracted from the principal message that he had wanted to convey: that the Soviet system was inhuman, corrupt and inefficient, and must be prevented from extending its power and influence over other countries.

Where does the truth lie? There is no doubt that there is a strong element of truth in much of Cockburn's accusation. The game of "You scratch my throat, I'll scratch yours" is well known in Nato intelligence circles. It has undoubtedly contributed to the arms race. In terms both of quantity and of quality, if that is synonymous with technological development. It is also true that the efficiency and readiness for combat of the Soviet forces has been exaggerated. They are not ten feet tall. Nevertheless the sheer size of those forces and their reserves, the length of conscript service, the toughness of their human material, the single-minded, relentless determination of the Soviet system, and the devotion of their armed forces to the doctrine of an offensive strategy, all add up to a significant military capability which, in spite of all its possible internal weaknesses, does pose a serious threat, to belittle which, as Cockburn does, smacks of dangerous complacency.

However, the threat is not so overwhelming that it is impossible for Nato to provide a conventional force adequate to meet it. It does not justify the attitude of despair which puts its "trust" in initiating nuclear war in order to counter it.

Handwritten note: "The threat is not so overwhelming that it is impossible for Nato to provide a conventional force adequate to meet it. It does not justify the attitude of despair which puts its 'trust' in initiating nuclear war in order to counter it."

Islam's champion

Jonathan Sumption

P. H. NEWBY
Saladin in His Time
210pp. Faber. £10.95.
0571 130445
RONALD C. FINUCANE
Soldiers of the Faith: Crusaders and Moslems
at War
247pp. Dent. £12.50.
0460 120409

Saladin was the archetypal virtuous pagan of medieval literature, a man whose qualities of courage and largesse made him an honorary European if not an honorary Christian. Dante found him in Limbo with those other pagan heroes, Hector, Aeneas and Caesar, but "seen on his own, standing apart".

He was an outsider even in Muslim terms. His family came from a Kurdish tribe of Armenia, a people of dwindling importance in Near Eastern politics, who had been overwhelmed by the Saljuk Turks during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Saladin's father and grandfather and his uncle had all uprooted themselves, making their careers in the service of Saljuk princes. They made their own way, as Saladin was to do more spectacularly after them.

The principal Islamic state of the Near East in Saladin's youth was the Syrian principality of Nur al-Din with its capital at Damascus. Damascus was an important spiritual centre, the great rampart of Sunni orthodoxy against the infidel Franks and the heretical Shi'ites of Fatimid Egypt. Nur al-Din had made use of this Islamic enthusiasm, in some ways the mirror image of the crusading impulse in Christian Europe, to build his state and wage holy war against the Frankish enemy. The unevenness of the results was due to the limits of his resources of manpower and money, and to the divisions of the Islamic Near East, which left the Christian kings of Jerusalem holding the balance between Egypt and Syria. Saladin owes his historical fame to his success in solving, at least temporarily, both of these problems. His intelligence and charm would have been forgotten otherwise.

It was not an outcome which anyone could have predicted. In the late 1160s, Nur al-Din sent Shirkuh, one of Saladin's uncles, to make trouble in Egypt by intervening in the perpetual factional strife which marked the last years of the Fatimid caliphate. In 1169 Shirkuh made himself vizier, and when he died within a few weeks of taking office Saladin, who was with him, succeeded. In 1171 Saladin removed his nominal master, the Caliph, and brought Egypt officially back to the Sunni fold loyal to the Caliphate of Baghdad. Initially his government had no other foundation than the well-bought support of the Kurds and Turks of the expeditionary army in Egypt.

Military power alone was no guarantee of permanence and much of Saladin's career after 1171 is a prolonged campaign to set his rule on a more solid basis. He succeeded Nur al-Din as the main champion of Islam against the European intruders and then, two years after Nur al-Din's death in 1174, to his position as ruler of Damascus and Syria. The two were connected. Saladin justified himself to his subjects, and to those whom he hoped would become his subjects, by the service which he did to Islam, in prosecuting the holy war.

Pious conviction and political calculation entered into Saladin's policy in proportions which every biographer has tried vainly to discover. The difficulty lies in penetrating behind the propaganda, the eulogies of some of his contemporaries and the malicious perversions of others. Even tried al-Din, Saladin's secretary, although well informed and surprisingly objective, is astonishingly discreet at awkward moments. This is the problem of all medieval biography, Islamic as well as Christian. There is no gulf between Caesar and Louis XI of France whose thoughts can be known in any detail. Saladin is no exception.

P. H. Newby is judiciously silent on this and other questions which cannot be answered. What he has written is a well-constructed and readable narrative of Saladin's life based on all the Arabic sources which are readily available, which makes it a most valuable book for those

thoroughness and analytical perception his work does not approach that of Lyons and Jackson (published, I would guess, after Mr Newby's researches had been completed). But for those who are deterred by that numbing and indigestible work, this is the book.

The emphasis is naturally on the last decade of Saladin's life, the period for which the sources are fullest and the one in which Saladin came close to fulfilling his ambition to drive the Franks into the sea. The Franks themselves knew what had changed:

In former times every [Muslim] city had its own ruler . . . To contend in battle against adversaries of widely differing and frequently conflicting ideas, adversaries who distrusted each other, involved less peril . . . But now, God has so willed it, all the kingdoms adjacent to us have been brought under one man . . . This Saladin, a man of humble antecedents and low station now holds under his control all these kingdoms.

The words (quoted by Newby) belong to the great Latin chronicler William of Tyre.

The conquest of Egypt in the 1170s by a Syrian (or rather an adoptive Syrian) not only transformed the strategic situation but gave the traditional enemies of the Franks access to the great wealth of the Nile valley. Saladin, although personally uncorrupt, was a bad financial administrator and did not make as much of this advantage as he might have done. Even so, he was able to field larger armies for longer periods than any previous Islamic champions. About half the army which decisively defeated the Franks at the Horns of Hattin in 1187 and destroyed the kingdom of Jerusalem, had come from Egypt.

In the end Saladin was too successful. Having all but eliminated the Franks of Palestine he provoked a counter-attack in the shape of the Third Crusade, the most successful of all the crusades after the first. When Saladin died in 1193 the Franks had not succeeded in their main objective of recovering Jerusalem, but they were back in possession of the coastal towns which had been the backbone of the old kingdom of Jerusalem in every sense other than the spiritual one. Moreover they had conquered Cyprus, a secure base which enabled a Christian presence to survive in the Near East for three centuries – or four if the Venetians be counted as Christians.

Ronald Finucane expresses in his introduction the hope that *Soldiers of the Faith* "will fill the gap between scholarly monographs and popular expositions". This is perhaps a surprising ambition, for crusading studies are the only area of medieval history where there is no such gap. Serious scholars like Runciman and Mayer have found it possible to write histories which are written in (or translated into) good English, approachable by non-specialists, and read by them in large numbers. Still, Mr Finucane's own contribution is welcome evidence that the tradition is still alive.

His purpose is to describe the organization of the crusading wars and to convey some impression of what it must have been like to fight in them. He does this primarily from the Christian point of view but there is an occasional foray into the less familiar territory on the other side.

Although the result is colourful and entertaining, his method, which involves piling illustration upon example over a period which covers four centuries, sometimes gives the impression that nothing much changed during that period and that crusading experience was uniform. This is obviously not what Finucane means to convey. The early crusades were more or less spontaneous outbursts of militant religious enthusiasm which produced huge armies consisting mainly of untrained peasants. After the middle of the twelfth century there was a deliberate attempt to exclude these extra of doubtful military value, an attempt which transformed the reality of crusading and removed much although obviously not all of its idealism. Crusading armies of the thirteenth century consisted of professional soldiers, generally under the command of their own rulers, with a relatively well developed hierarchy of command. Apart from the climate, the experience of fighting in such armies cannot have differed much from the more familiar experience of soldiers in Western Europe.

Crusading warfare had distinctive features in the twelfth century. Thereafter it was just warfare. The Renaissance was a "moment of change" as much in military as in other things. Indeed, some argue that the coming of the Renaissance was chiefly a function of military process – some long-laid and slew, like the decline of the feudal army, some recent and rapid, like the appearance of east-metal, mobile cannon. The former is supposed to have released rulers from dependence for armed support against their enemies on the goodwill of their bovine barony, the latter to have made barons who took to arms against their rulers the target of a sudden and severe squelch. The combined effects were to concentrate power at the centre, whence it could be deployed to raise taxes for hiring professional soldiers, fortifying frontiers, beautifying cities, patronizing poets and painters, investing in fleets and trade-goods and so priming the pump of cash circulation over again.

Coping with gunpowder

John Keegan

J. R. HALE
Renaissance War Studies
524pp. Hambledon Press. £28.
0907628 028

The Renaissance was a "moment of change" as much in military as in other things. Indeed, some argue that the coming of the Renaissance was chiefly a function of military process – some long-laid and slew, like the decline of the feudal army, some recent and rapid, like the appearance of east-metal, mobile cannon. The former is supposed to have released rulers from dependence for armed support against their enemies on the goodwill of their bovine barony, the latter to have made barons who took to arms against their rulers the target of a sudden and severe squelch. The combined effects were to concentrate power at the centre, whence it could be deployed to raise taxes for hiring professional soldiers, fortifying frontiers, beautifying cities, patronizing poets and painters, investing in fleets and trade-goods and so priming the pump of cash circulation over again.



"Ritratto d'uomo d'armi con lo scudiero" by Giorgione, reproduced from Einaudi's *Storia dell'arte italiana*, volume 5. Dal medioevo al quattrocento (623p. Turin: Einaudi. L. 115000 8806 050702).

It is, of course, too neat an explanation to fit the phenomena. But it at least has the merit of directing attention to an understudied subject, which is the range, rate and nature of military change in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Professional military historians are incurably modernist. Medievalists are driven by the hellishness of their fauna into the wastelands of the battlefield. The period which intervenes is very little visited by historians. But what it lacks in quantity is made up in quality. Michael Roberts's study of "the military revolution" in northern Europe is a landmark. Geoffrey Parker's *Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road* illuminates the mechanism of Habsburg Imperial control via the rarely tackled approach of logistics and military administration. Michael Mallet's *Mercenaries and Their Masters* demolishes persistent myths – particularly that of the bloodless reign of condottieri combat – and replaces them with a new understanding of the nature of hired armies.

The Professor of Italian at London University is an unlikely recruit to this small but select band. Yet not only has he made the military history of the Renaissance one of his chief interests, he has also been hard at work in the field for so long that "recruit" is a slur on his standing. His collection of related essays on the subject bears out. The earliest, on "War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy", was published as far back as 1960; the most recent, on "Tudor Fortification", appeared last year. Together they represent the scope of a wide but remarkably congruent approach to Renaissance warfare, which concentrates on three essentials: the effect of warfare on the Renaissance mind, the transformation of the military class in the Renaissance period, and the economic and political ramifications of the new "artillery" fortification in Renaissance states. Fortification, designed to deny access to places of light and learning, might seem an odd subject for a military historian. But

as Christopher Duffy has shown in his important book, *Siege Warfare*, fortification played a key role in Renaissance statecraft. The rise of mobile artillery undoubtedly undercut the power of vassals to defy their severities. It temporarily favoured the rise of kings rich enough to buy artillery parks, and so precipitated the solidification of the dynastic states. Thanks to the ingenuity of the Renaissance mind, however – Leonardo chose to insist on his talents as a fortification engineer before his reputation as a painter – an antidote to mobile artillery was swiftly found. It lay in the logic of geometry and revealed itself in the ground-hugging polygons which resisted artillery as towering walls could not. The resulting advantage was largely enjoyed by the big states, and so might have hurried forward the onset of absolutism. But an indirect effect was to preserve the independence of those few states – notably Venice in the south, the Netherlands in the north – where civic values flourished and which also had trading revenues large enough to meet the enormous capital costs of the new architecture.

Fortification could thus be a bastion of liberty, which is one of Professor Hale's points. He has numbers of others, as befits a pioneer of fortification studies. Of which I demand comment, one particular, e.g. general: the particular, that the crucial bastion feature was offensive in function, is contentious – "counter-offensive" would define it better; the general, that fortification could be oppressive quite as often as defensive of liberty, is so fertile a concept as to demand pages rather than paragraphs for discussion. His two essays on the subject show that it exercised the citizen of Florence in practice as keenly as Machiavelli in contemporary theory – and if that does not stimulate a research student towards a dissertation, what will?

Free citizens feared fortification – or, to be precise, its "citadel" element – because it armoured tyrants against revolution. Yet the general effect of military change in Hale's chosen period was to alleviate the burden of warriorism on society. War had become more complex with the onset of gunpowder, demanding a new sort of military leader. The mounted man-at-arms, a prima donna, was quite out of place on a battlefield where success required the co-operation of several arms. But the mercenary officer, though adaptable, had made himself politically suspect. He travelled too easily between employers, whom he – as with the *Sforzas* – was prepared to supplant if the chance offered. The resulting dilemmas – it is endemic, though the reverend seigniors of the Renaissance could not know that – was thought best resolved by instituting a system of military education. It was to be aimed at the youth of the aristocratic class: its purpose to civilize the overweening and reclaim to responsibility the wastrels. The essays in the collection on the efforts made towards those ends in England, Italy and Germany are of great originality. At the same time, they stimulate study of recognition in anyone concerned with military education today. The aim of modern military academies is to produce efficient yet obedient military servants of the state. It was exactly that aim which the founders of Renaissance military academies espoused.

A burning contemporary issue which would also reverberate in modern minds was the morality of the new warfare of gunpowder and firearms. "The just war" was an idea expounded by Aquinas; but it was the energy of Reformation and Counter-Reformation that Mary which ramified and disseminated it. Mary, which side by side with religious was secular thought, whether juridical or merely humilitic, in either case exercised and alarmed by the growing ease with which men killed each other, particularly in the impersonal and distant way which gunpowder made possible. It was a development which part of the public mind of the Renaissance deplored. But another part, intrigued and excited by this revelation of power, was ready to extend the borders of power, and ready to accommodate and even endorse it. "Optimistic students of human nature", Professor Hale concludes, "can take little comfort from the reactions of their Renaissance ancestors to the greatest challenge to Europe's conscience offered by military technology before the atom bomb".

Strategies of attrition

Hew Strachan

JEFFERY WILLIAMS
Byng of Vimy: General and Governor General
399pp. Leo Cooper/Secker and Warburg.
£15.95.
0436571012
ANTHONY BABINGTON
Far the Side of Example: Capital Courts-Martial 1914-1920
238pp. Leo Cooper/Secker and Warburg.
£8.95.
0436030500
JOHN TERRAINE
The First World War 1914-1918
195pp. Leo Cooper/Secker and Warburg.
£9.95.
0436517302

On May 22, 1915, Julian Byng – then commanding the Cavalry Corps in France – wrote to R. D. Blumenfeld, "Evidently the only way to end this war is to kill Boches, consequently every Boche-killer sent to the Dardanelles is a man wasted." Byng's was an early formulation of what came to be called the strategy of attrition. A year and a half later, as the Somme battle drew to its close, Byng defined the strategy more clearly: "continued, persistent determined wearing away of the German strength" is "the surest quickest road to victory".

Before 1914 commanders had looked for decisive battlefield success on the Napoleonic model. During the First World War they reluctantly recognized that the tactical and technological conditions of trench warfare rendered the traditional means to victory inappropriate. But, as far as the British were concerned, the implications of attrition were never welded into a coherent grand strategy. Plans to fight attrition battles were fatally compromised by a lingering hope that a breakthrough might be achieved and a decisive victory fellow. It was this intellectual difficulty that lay at the bottom of so much alleged incompetence in generalship on the Western front.

Byng's career illustrates the problem, while at the same time revealing how inappropriate are the traditional jibes levelled against the Great War commanders. The youngest son of an impoverished aristocratic family, he had charged with the 10th Hussars of El Teb in 1884. Despite his patrician origins (or, perhaps, because of them) he was a remarkably unsuited, unassuming and unpatronizing man. As a divisional and corps commander, he regularly visited the forward trenches; he remained close to his troops, conscientiously sparing luxuries to which they could not enjoy access. Although a cavalryman, he embraced the new technologies of the Great War with enthusiasm. The tank battle of Cambrai was planned under his command, and included provision for interdiction bombing by the Royal Flying Corps. But Cambrai also illustrates the strategic dilemma. The battle's primary purpose was limited, to draw German reserves away from Ypres. Its success encouraged Byng to expand its objectives: he did not want another "wasting fight" and so would not provide reserves, but he did hope that the cavalry might find the path open to cross the St Quentin canal. The purpose of the battle became confused. Caught on an indefensible trench line, Byng's 3rd Army was the victim of a German counter-attack on November 30, 1917. As Byng had shown at Vimy in April, he could prepare and execute a limited attack with devastating effect: what was lacking was the framework within which such successes contributed to the strategy of attrition.

Byng was a decent, competent man, as Jeffery Williams's biography makes clear. He left no private papers, and therefore many fascinating issues relating to his early life – the illwill between him and General Gough, Byng's editorship of *The Cavalry Journal* in a period of acute controversy for the mounted arm – are left undeveloped. But these disappointments are brushed aside as Byng's importance grows. The book's momentum comes from the reactions of their Renaissance ancestors to the greatest challenge to Europe's conscience offered by military technology before the atom bomb.

The British army, Courts-martial did little to seek information on the backgrounds of those appearing before them: their records reflect this deficiency. Moreover Judge Bobington is rightly anxious to protect the relatives of those concerned, and therefore reveals neither names nor units. Consequently many conclusions must, at least for the moment, be ducked. What sort of social background did these men come from? What areas of Britain? Did some regiments have a better record than others? Only three officers were executed. Were they judged by different standards or did their training and social background confer a greater sense of responsibility?

The executions do have one clear feature: 266 of a total of 346 were punishments for desertion, and all but a few offences were committed in France and Belgium, especially in the years 1916 and 1917. The British army, unlike those of France and Russia, escaped serious mutiny: only three executions were for this offence. Instead its soldiers manifested their strains by fleeing the battlefield. Desertion was a reaction to a military problem, not a civil crime. The army had expanded too rapidly for the quality of its training or of its officers to be unaffected. The strategy of attrition imposed novel tactical conditions, for which the familiar training methods were inadequate, and generated a demand for manpower which overwhelmed the selection criteria of the medical boards. The pulverizing military conditions of the strategy simply strained some men too much. The purpose of the death penalty, in the view of one corps commander, was "to make

such men fear running away more than they fear the enemy". Imprisonment was no punishment, when it conferred security from the battlefield. The death penalty was summary, and above all exemplary.

The response to the consequent legal criticisms was to defend the sentences as the products of these military necessities. Justice was dispensed on the grounds of military utility: the choice was whether the condemned man could ever be a good soldier or whether his execution would stiffen the resolve of others. His rights as a citizen were swamped by the immediate imperatives, and his innocence of any civil crime never properly faced. The officers serving on the field general courts-martial were conscious of military pressures, particularly from their seniors, and – at least until 1916-17 – had inadequate legal advice. They frequently gave insufficient attention to the medical history of the accused. Wounded men bore psychological, as well as physical, scars. The diagnosis of nervous conditions, inadequately lumped together as "shell shock", was arbitrary and subjective. Medical officers were looking for malingering, not considering the predisposition of some to a lower breaking-point than others. They were slow to observe that the effects of trench combat were cumulative: the deserter was as often a long-serving pre-war regular or reservist, with a good combat record, as he was an immature and inadequately trained conscript.

The villains of Babington's book are traditional. His generals are the incompetent, uncaring caricatures which Williams demon-

strates to be so inappropriate. In particular, they form no part of John Terraine's interpretation of the war. Increasingly, Terraine's books have sought to vindicate the strategy of attrition, arguing that through it the British army – under Haig's command – caused the German collapse in 1918. *The First World War* is an early, low-key, and very readable example of the genre, having been first published in 1965. The 1983 edition is shorn of the many superb photographs which gave the 1965 edition much of its attractiveness. Instead it has an introduction in which Terraine is disarmingly honest about his work: "in all my studies of the war I have tried to reduce its vast complexities to some kind of comprehensible simplicities." The trouble is that, while his simplifications do contain truths, they also produce distortions. As the years have gone by the ideas have become more finely honed and Terraine's Great War, whatever his protestations, is Britain's Great War: in a six-page chapter on the war's causes, the renections of Berlin and Vienna are glossed over, while those of London are accorded five pages; fifteen pages are devoted to Gallipoli, two lines to the Bolshevik seizure of power. If the case for the success of the British army's campaign of attrition is to be made, it needs to be set in a wider context than this.

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Storms over the South Atlantic

Lawrence Freedman

ARTHUR GAVSHON and DESMOND RICE
The Sinking of the Belgrano
218pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.
0436413329

At 16.01 local time on May 2, 1982, a forty-four-year-old cruiser, the General Belgrano, was sunk by a Mark 4 torpedo of a similar vintage, fired from a much more modern, nuclear submarine HMS Conqueror. On return to base the Conqueror flew the Jolly Roger, signifying the sinking of an enemy ship, so reviving a custom last seen in 1945. In doing so it demonstrated a defiant naval pride in an incident that had already become something of a political embarrassment.

No other engagement in the Falklands war proved to be as costly in human life – 368 sailors were killed – and no other has proved to be so controversial. As soon as the news broke there was disquiet at Britain's responsibility for such a dramatic escalation of the war, at the fact that the attack had taken place outside a Total Exclusion Zone around the Falklands defined by Britain, and the unfortunate effect it had on a Peruvian peace initiative. Official explanations have not always been consistent with the evidence or even with each other, and this has contributed to the disquiet. A conspiracy theory has developed, promoted most notably by the Labour MP Tam Dalyell, to the effect that the Belgrano was ordered to be torpedoed so as to wreck the Peruvian initiative.

This new investigation by Desmond Rice and Arthur Gavshon is intended to add to the disquiet. It draws on a substantial amount of new material, particularly concerning the Peruvian proposals and the movements of HMS Conqueror. It exposes the inadequacies in the official story and dispels some myths. However, despite their best efforts the authors fail to substantiate any of the most serious charges against the British government and indeed provide evidence to refute them. More seriously they have not drawn on or even challenged other evidence already in the public domain – evidence which makes the sinking of the Belgrano a less puzzling incident than they wish to suggest.

There is general agreement that when the news of the loss of the Belgrano reached the Argentine military committee, then discussing the Peruvian proposals, on the evening of May 2, all hope of acceptance was dashed. Rice and Gavshon demonstrate with the aid of the transcript of General Galtieri's prior conversations with President Belaúnde of Peru that Galtieri himself was well disposed towards the proposals. However they cannot show that without the sinking of the cruiser the Junta would have accepted the proposals and they do not discuss the widely held view that Admiral Anaya would have vetoed acceptance (they do not know, for example, whether or not Anaya was at the crucial meeting of the evening of May 1 when those of the Junta present decided on a more conciliatory attitude). Was this negative consequence intended? In the Watergate terms in which the authors would undoubtedly like us to view this matter: "How much did she know and when was she told?"

Mrs Thatcher and her War Cabinet should have known about the Peruvian initiative, but at the time of the decision could not have known that it was likely to amount to much. From the book's own chronology it is clear that the War Cabinet had agreed to the attack on the Belgrano, and dispersed from Chequers, before they could have known about the progress of the Peruvian proposals (it was not until the afternoon, British time, that the Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym heard of this, in the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig's office) and they were not actually informed until after the Belgrano had been hit (when Pym eventually got round to reporting back to London). They might have known what the Peruvians were up to through the British Ambassador to Lima but even this source could not have informed them in time of the encouraging signals from Buenos Aires.

The only way that it could have received such signals is if the CIA had tapped the Junta's meeting on the evening of May 1 and transmitted the results directly to London. The authors

assume that this must have been done. They do not bother themselves with such mundane possibilities that even the best intelligence effort takes time to get its information and make sense of it, that relevant people may not attend crucial meetings or decide to go to bed, or that the Americans might have found their sources somewhat less loquacious than usual the day after the United States had come out in favour of Argentina's enemy! It is a general problem with this book that the authors are indignant at every evidence of delayed communications as if the norm in crisis and conflict is always perfect information, accurately and confidently interpreted and acted upon instantly.

To salvage the sense of scandal, all the authors can suggest is that the War Cabinet never had any interest in a negotiated settlement, apart from an unconditional surrender by the Junta. This assertion is not supported by any evidence and is flatly contradicted by other accounts, for example that by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, which benefited from much better access to high-level British sources and demonstrates the much more conciliatory attitude taken by the government following the international reaction to the loss of the Belgrano and of HMS Sheffield two days later.

Clearly the War Cabinet was taking a more relaxed attitude towards the negotiating process on May 2. The conflict at that point after a shaky start seemed to be going quite well and the Cabinet was not under the pressure that the Junta felt itself to be under to make concessions. The unfortunate consequences of this attitude appear, from this account, to have been compounded by Francis Pym's limited political clout and diplomatic inexperience and Alexander Haig's tendency to play an over-complicated game. Some of this may be clarified when Haig's own memoir of the conflict appears. It is also clear that there was no reason why the Belgrano need have undermined the peace process. The authors quote the conclusion of the official Argentinian Rattenbach Report to the effect that "the most rational and productive course [for the Junta] would have been to accept the proposal in spite of the sinking of the General Belgrano".

Certainly, if the War Cabinet had ordered the attack with the peace process in mind it could not have been sure as to the precise effect that it would produce. Up to that point military pressure had produced positive diplomatic results and it was only the severity of the losses (which ministers had not, unwisely, expected) that produced the negative reaction from Buenos Aires. The effect of a comparable loss of life on a British ship would probably have been to hasten a settlement.

Other than the effect on the Military Committee's deliberations the sinking of the Belgrano and the fate of the Peruvian proposals do not seem to have had much to do with each other, except to demonstrate the problems posed for diplomacy by the intensifying pace of the military operations.

The reason why it is assumed that the two were closely related is the belief that the attack was not justified on military grounds. It is noted that the rules of engagement were hurriedly changed to permit the attack, that the Belgrano was not well armed (though its escorts were), and had turned round to go home. There was only a slight risk that the trailing submarine would lose sight of its quarry or that a plunger movement was developing with other elements of the Argentine Navy.

The authors wish to direct a political attack against the government. However, they accept that the initiative came from the military. By this stage in the conflict, after a rather harrowing experience in the re-taking of South Georgia, the politicians felt neither willing nor able to question the military's judgment.

The difficulty with the government's explanations lies in the attempt to present the attack as a defensive action when it was nothing of the sort. The authors savage this attempt but without themselves seriously questioning the military judgment. They suggest that it is part of the Navy's nature to see any enemy ship as a threat and therefore wish to sink it, but argue that the politicians should have seen the wider picture. What they fail to do is to ask whether the attack might have formed part of a coherent military strategy.

a great military success in that afterwards the Argentine Navy prudently if ungallantly stayed in part. This – or alternatively drawing the Argentine Navy out for an open fight – was exactly what the British commanders were trying to achieve. The strategy at the time was to engage as much as possible of the Argentine Navy and Air Force in order to weaken them prior to any attempted landing to retake the Falklands.

From the moment that the first submarine had arrived off the Falklands and spotted a landing ship the Navy had wanted to sink an Argentine vessel. Its persistent requests had been refused by the government, which did not want to jeopardize the negotiations. It was only on April 22 that the government relented and allowed the submarines to patrol outside the Exclusion Zone. The next day Argentina was warned that any approach by its warships and aircraft which could amount to a threat to the task force would be dealt with by appropriate action. Rice and Gavshon correctly point out that this was ambiguous, and also that the Royal Navy itself felt obliged to seek new rules of engagement before the attack on the Belgrano could be authorized. Nevertheless, this change ought to have dispelled the notion that combat could only take place in the Exclusion Zone. The Argentine Navy had no excuse for not recognizing that any armed ship could easily be construed as a threat.

It was only on April 30 after the failure of Haig's shuttle diplomacy that the British task force was allowed to go on the offensive. On May 1 came the first air engagements, in which the British came out on top. Unfortunately for the strategy, the Argentine Air Force thereafter decided to conserve its resources until required to oppose any British landing. As part of the same offensive the task-force commander wished to attack the Argentine carrier and flagship, the Veinticinco de Mayo. However, the submarine charged with this task, HMS Splendid, lost the trail. Meanwhile the Conqueror had found the third and admittedly the weakest of the Argentine naval task forces, headed by the General Belgrano, accompanied by two destroyers. The authors wonder why, if the Belgrano was really such a threat, it was trailed for so long (some forty hours) before the attack. The answer is that it was not much of a threat and that the Navy was hoping to sink the carrier, but once the carrier had been lost the Belgrano represented the only means of pursuing the current strategy of intimidating the Argentine Navy. By this time the cover story was somewhat flimsier than it would have been if they had attacked earlier when the Argentine ships could have been presented as steaming towards the task force.

If the carrier had been found then there

would have been no problem with a cover story. On May 1 the Veinticinco de Mayo had been out searching for the British fleet. According to Rice and Gavshon, at 20.07 that evening, having seen no action and the action elsewhere having ceased, the Argentine fleet was ordered to return home. This was confirmed at 01.19 on May 2. However, other accounts based on good Argentine sources suggest something quite different. According to these accounts, the Veinticinco de Mayo did not leave for base until dawn, having unsuccessfully attempted to launch its Skyhawks against the task force. (At the time all the relevant units were outside the Exclusion Zone.) If this is correct then serious doubts are raised against the supposition that through the interception of Argentine signals the British commanders would have known that the Argentine fleet was en route home.

In fact the Argentine forces had hardly been idle – they had just not been very successful. According to Argentine and other accounts, the submarine Snn Luis had torpedoed one British ship, possibly a frigate, on May 1, only for the torpedoes to fail to explode: a pair of Super Etendards had tried to mount an Exocet attack only to be thwarted by a failure in their initial in-flight refuelling; and the aircraft attacking the British task force missed their targets, though only just in the case of HMS Glamorgan.

The point is that the military phase had begun in earnest as far as both sides were concerned. For a number of reasons the British were more successful but that was not far from trying on the Argentine's part. Rice and Gavshon tend to assume throughout that an eventual British victory was almost a foregone conclusion but that was certainly not how it appeared at the time to the commanders, not to many impartial observers.

The difficulty is that in contemporary conflict a military logic is always expected to be subservient to a political logic, which is why there has been a persistent search for political motives for the attack on the Belgrano. This political logic is supposed to point to a graduated response, with each escalation only justified if political remedies continue to be frustrated; and all action of the early stages is expected to be solely for defensive purposes, which is why the question with the Belgrano is seen by all sides as being one of the character of the immediate threat posed to the British task force. In the Falklands war of 1982 such a political approach could not be followed because neither side could be confident of victory. Once hostilities had begun, both found themselves approving a military logic that turned out to be politically uncomfortable. That is why the Belgrano was sunk.

The view from the bridge

Ian McGeoch

JOHN WINTON
Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890–1990
378pp. Michael Joseph. £14.95.
0718121635
STEPHEN HOWARTH
Morning Glory: A history of the Imperial Japanese Navy
398pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.
0241111513

John Winton, in his valuable and timely study of convoy, as a measure for the defence of seaborne trade, is rightly concerned to demystify its abiding value and importance. As we approach the 1990s the Soviet Navy, with its Naval Air Force, poses a potential threat to the shipping of the non-Communist world. The nuclear threshold in Europe is proportional to the speed and certainty with which conventional reinforcements can be brought across the Atlantic. The advent of long-range, anti-ship missiles of pinpoint accuracy, which may be launched from submarines, from aircraft from surface ships, or from land, coupled with satellite surveillance of the surface of the oceans, calls into question once again the validity of convoy.

In 1914, when the Royal Navy discarded

operating it successfully for centuries, the decision was not based upon rational consideration of the factors involved. Not only did the lack of an adequate Naval Staff preclude this, but the Navy's leaders, to a man, anatomized convoy as a purely defensive strategy which, even if practicable (which was not admitted) could only be implemented by depriving the Grand Fleet of the destroyers which were essential to protect it from torpedo attack while it closed the annihilation range of the German High Seas Fleet. Only under direct pressure from Lloyd George, in the face of inexorable shipping losses, did the Admiralty adopt a general system of convoy. And, although it was reintroduced at the outbreak of the Second World War, study of the forces and tactics needed had been allowed to lapse, and many lessons remained unlearned. Oddly enough, one of the few lacunae in Stephen Howarth's otherwise comprehensive and authoritative history of the Imperial Japanese Navy is the absence of any reference to its failure to protect shipping upon the safe and timely arrival of which Japan was totally dependent for the oil and strategic raw materials that it was the purpose of the war to secure. Not until March 1944 did the Japanese Navy institute a system of "large convoys" and begin to reap the benefits in terms of US submarines sunk, and ships saved. But it was too little and too late. Not only "face", but the war, was lost.

Guns for sale

Anthony Sampson

PATRICK BROGAN and ALBERT ZARCA
Deadly Business: The Story of Sam Cummings – the World's greatest Arms Dealer
384pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.
0718124154

The character and career of Sam Cummings might seem at first sight to be made for a sinister and thrilling biography. He is the biggest dealer in small arms in the world – though not strictly the greatest arms dealer, since that title is now reserved for governments. He flits through the palaces and arsenals of some of the world's nastiest dictators, re-equipping their armies, preparing them for coups and inspecting their caches of surplus weaponry. He learnt his trade in the CIA and still moves on the edge of secret services. He was consulted by the Argentinians in the midst of the Falklands war, and took part in a British seminar afterwards to analyse its lessons.

Certainly this book, which is largely based on interviews with Cummings, provides useful evidence about many murky conflicts in the developing world – the Central American coups and counter-coups, the civil war in Angola, the South African attack on the Seychelles or the terror-campaigns of President Gaddafi. It is well-written and intelligently sceptical, in a dry style which reflects Cummings's own cynical perspective, while keeping him at a distance. Anyone who is interested in the plots and machinations behind the wars of the past thirty years should check the Cummings version.

Cummings's hard-boiled commentary does something to explain the appalling difficulty of trying to restrain the spread of hand-guns in the United States or – more serious – the arming of the Third World which is causing such misery in Central America or in Lebanon today. He likes to repeat that "guns don't kill people, people kill people". And his whole philosophy, if such it can be called, underlines the fatalism that now seems to afflict all Western governments in their approach to the developing

world. Yet in the end the story is oddly disappointing, whether as a thriller, or as a serious explanation of wars; for Cummings, behind his bleak jokes and his ruthless business ambitions is really, it turns out, a bit of a bore – a gun-freak who seems not to have developed beyond that. He is not wicked enough to emerge as an exciting villain; he cannot compare for instance with the ghastly gun-runner Frank Terpil, an ex-CIA agent who set up a school for saboteurs in Libya and arranged crooked arms deals round the world, whose exploits, as Patrick Brogan and Albert Zarca point out, raise fundamental questions about the corruption of American intelligence. Cummings has remained basically a broker, dealing between one government and another and always dependent on the permission of his Western suppliers. He and the authors protest, perhaps too much, that he now has no links with the CIA; and he insists that he never pays bribes – an opinion which Brogan and Zarca dissent from.

But the detachment which Cummings maintains in this story, whether real or assumed, leaves us without much real flesh-and-blood to get hold of. He buys guns in one place, sells them in another, rushing from one crisis-point to another without apparently understanding much about what happens afterwards, or why. He is after all no more or less than a businessman, treating guns as if they were biscuits or cameras. Not surprisingly the authors' interest seems to flag towards the end and somehow the central figure never quite comes to life. We see him living discreetly in Monte Carlo, with his conventional wife and daughters, technically a British citizen but really with no obvious nationality. We see him visiting dictators, finding them delightful; we see him inspecting arsenals with his expert eye. But his own personality seems to be obliterated by the gunfire – only a mocking laugh, echoing through the arsenals. Perhaps it is an apt retribution: that he should become like one of his weapons, handed on from one squalid war to another, changing sides and surviving every political swing, forgetting any loyalty or nationality in the excitement of the business and eventually bored even by war.

Quarter-masters' stores

M. R. D. Foot

PIERRE LORAIN
Secret Warfare: The arms and the techniques of the Resistance.
Adapted by David Kalin
185 pp. Orbis. £7.99.
0856135860

Pierre Lorain's admirable book, privately printed in Paris in 1972 as *Armement clandestin: SOE 1941-1944 France*, is now available in an enhanced translation. It brings into exact focus a great many details about the arming of French resistance by the British Special Operations Executive that had previously been left vague; it makes a strong appeal to three classes of reader, two small and one large.

The small group of arms buffs will be riveted by it. Lorain is an architect, with an architect's sense of form and clarity of vision. He provides a sharp outline drawing of each of the fighting instruments he describes: They range from the Handley Page Halifax and the Short Stirling, four-engined aircraft used by bomber and transport commands of the RAF to parachute arms into France, to the rimless 9mm cartridge of the Sten gun and the escaper's miniature compass, hardly more than half an inch across. On the way, he displays the Bren, three marks of the Sten, the M-1 Winchester carbina and the M-3 sub-machine-gun, four marks of the Tommy-gun, the PIAT and the bazooka, and a few of SOE's odder devices: such as the Welrod, a single-shot pistol hideable in a trouser leg, or a fountain-pen that could emit a bullet or a pellet of tear-gas. He gives the colour code for time-pencil delay fuses, and shows how a mock log-signal could blow up a train.

The second limited group that will enjoy this book will be most attracted by David Kahn's additions to it. Kahn made his name with *The Codebreakers* (1966), a blockbuster survey of coding and codebreaking from ancient to recent times; Lorain and Kahn examine in lucid

detail SOE's cipher arrangements to 1941-3, before that service found the answer to its tactical problem. Anyone who enjoys verbal puzzles will enjoy their dissection of the Playfair code – invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone, and familiar to fans of Dorothy Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey – and of its more intricate successor, the horribly complicated double transposition code based on two numerical keys. When it became clear that the Gestapo might easily unravel double transposition, SOE switched to the Delastelle system which was almost, and then to the one-time pad system which was quite, unbreakable. Why de Gaulle's headquarters in London and Algiers were left to continue for a year to exchange lengthy messages with their supporters in France is a separate question, that Lorain raises but does not seek to answer.

There is also plenty of material here for wireless enthusiasts. Through his friendship with Brigadier F. W. Nicholls, SOE's director of signals, in the brigadier's old age, Lorain has been able to secure detailed drawings of a great many clandestine wireless sets, some created by MI6, some by SOE, and some by obscure but exceedingly competent exiled Poles, who beavered away in a small electronics factory at Letchworth to produce sets that in Lorain's view make all the others look like museum pieces. Nicholls (who died in 1974) and Colonel "Remy" (Gilbert Renault-Rouiller) each contribute a short foreword.

It is not easy for those who never lived in a Nazi-occupied country to imagine what it was like to be there at the time, and to be actively involved in the struggle to get the Nazis out. Lorain's text and illustrations combine very well to give an idea of the results for those who volunteered for this desperate and snag-ridden struggle. In Nicholls's phrase, "their contribution enabled overrun France to regain her self-respect": something that does not show up in any revisionist history books, but was of infinite worth.

Bringing in the civilians

E. M. Spiers

BRIAN BOND
War and Society in Europe 1870–1970
256pp. Leicester University Press. £12 (paperback, Fantana, £3.50).
0718512278

Brian Bond has fully sustained the high standard set by the two previous volumes in the series, "War and European Society". He has surveyed an extremely complicated period in which the nature of war changed radically and civil society became ever more closely involved in the actual hostilities.

Beginning with the wars of the 1860s, Bond chronicles the rise of mass conscript armies and the dashing of hopes for a new era of international co-operation. He describes the two horrendous world wars in the first of which the barrier between soldiers and civilians was eroded and in the second virtually removed. He concludes with the division of Europe into two armed camps, with the re-emergence – at least in the West – of more highly professional forces relying upon sophisticated technology and weapon power, whose costs have spiralled and caused increasing public unease.

In this sweeping narrative Bond makes many important points and trenchant observations. In the late nineteenth century he notes that conscription was not simply regarded as a vital component of national security, but was also considered in some countries as "an instrument for developing social cohesion and political docility in the masses". The larger standing armies, he observes, backed by echelons of trained reserves, both reflected international tensions and made them harder to resolve. But the arms races of 1871–1914 did not precipitate any war; indeed, as Bond adds, they sometimes had connotations which were as much political and economic as purely strategic.

Bond attempts boldly to dispose of some

popular caricatures and misconceptions. He writes persuasively about the concept of militarism, indicating that even before the First World War, and certainly in the inter-war period, some civilians were much more belligerent than the military leaders. He questions the view of armies as being mindlessly opposed to technical and tactical innovation; he finds them more culpable of a "predisposition to focus on technicalities and gadgetry to the virtual exclusion of broader political and strategic implications". He also qualifies the assessment of the Allied bombing offensive in the Second World War as futile, comments perceptively about Nazi and Allied attitudes to the persecution of the Jews, and summarizes the revisionist literature on the role of wartime collaborators and the Resistance.

Inevitably, in a book so wide-ranging in scope and yet so concisely written, there are aspects which might have been included or amplified. Bond examines neither the distinctive Spanish military tradition, nor the role of war correspondents, nor European attitudes towards the presence of an American army in post-war Europe. He discusses the use of propaganda in the Second World War but barely mentions it in the First. He also describes the Geneva Gas Protocol as a "notable success" because gas was not employed in the Second World War, although this casual link is by no means clear. Had the protocol been a success, some countries would neither have qualified their ratifications of it, nor prepared both offensively and defensively for gas warfare, nor sought to deter its initiation during the war by threatening their adversaries with massive retaliation in kind.

Bond has had to be selective, however, and has rightly chosen to focus on the main military powers and on the central themes of the period. He has written lucidly and candidly, and, in commenting upon recent literature, forcefully presents his own opinions.

A Memoir WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS James Marshall-Cornwall

General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall
will be 97 when this book is published.

He has lived an extraordinary life. A school friend of Rupert Brooke, he entered the Royal Artillery in 1907 and seven years later joined Haig's staff in World War I. He served with Alexander, Alanbrooke and the Auk; dined with Churchill, De Gaulle, Nehru and Roosevelt, thought Monty was a cad, rubbed shoulders with King Farouk, Lawrence of Arabia and Rudolf Hess, lunched with Maharajas, Viceroy and conversed with most of Europe's vanished royal families.

All these meetings with remarkable men and women are only landmarks in a panoramic career ranging from global travel and the ability to interpret in eleven languages to arms trafficking and the Presidency of the Royal Geographical Society.

There are few more remarkable men
alive today and few more astonishing
memoirs published this century.

A Leo Cooper book published in association with Secker & Warburg

ISBN 0-438-97322-5
12th March



Illustrated, 266 pages
£12.95

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Most accounts of the New York Abstract Expressionists have been celebrations. This is partly because nothing attracts like success, and because it was the school of Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning *e tutti quanti* which made New York, rather than Paris, the "art capital of the world". It was their movement, too, which gladdened the heart of the great MoMA - the Museum of Modern Art - and raised it to its current eminence.

New York in the period immediately after the war had no guilts to expiate or dirty little secrets to hide. It also contained a fair number of talented artists who had been maturing in the cask and who were bored by the propagandist routines which, originally rooted in the turmoil of the 1930s, had taken on the aspects of a civic duty during the war-time years. The decision by the avant-garde to abandon representational painting was a reaction to the banalities of commitment, and a reaction whose timing happened to be superb. There was a receptive market, or audience, all over Europe as well as in the United States, for the confident, the innovative and the ideologically uncluttered. Irving Sandler's *Triumph of American Painting* is one of those books, about a period, whose unambiguous title is a statement rather than a claim.

Now comes Professor Serge Guilbaut, an art historian at the University of British Columbia, to combat what has become an orthodoxy in its turn. His title, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (University of Chicago

Press) also reveals his argument and declares his allegiance. So does his subtitle, which is "Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War". The book sets itself to "explain or to analyse the subterranean rumours, protests and frictions that tell us that something else is going on, something that is the real heart of the matter". A large claim, and one which is imperfectly validated by what is a most enthralling polemic.

Guilbaut argues that the decisive years, which were those between 1947 and 1951 (the year in which the avant-garde put on the exhibition now known as the Ninth Street Show) were actually years of pervasive public philistinism. He suspects that "modern art" was an export commodity, consciously promoted by cultural officialdom in a sort of international American boosterism, and seeks to show that, by use of their motifs in corporate advertising and in government-sponsored agencies, these rebels become domesticated and neutered, the apostles of a new conformity who provided a value-free décor for the bland "American century".

Also interesting, but unexplored, is the question of why the Abstract Expressionist movement came to an end. A clue is provided by an interview with the painter Clyfford Still, who felt that "to be stopped by a frame's edge was intolerable, a Euclidean prison, it had to be annihilated, its authoritarian implications repudiated with dissolving one's integrity and idea in material and mannerism". Here is the prefiguration of "action painting", and of the demi-monde, both nihilistic and narcissistic, of Andy Warhol and his imitators. Of what

cultural stratagem of the hegemonic establishment, pray tell, was that product? [How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS by David Rosand, Chairman of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University.]

* * *

At the age of seventy, William Burroughs is no longer an *enfant*, but is still *terrible*. He looks more than ever (to borrow a self-description from Howard Brookner's film profile of him) "like one of those sheep-killing dogs". But he is experiencing - it might be going too far to say enjoying - a revival of interest in his work. His life and his former "beat" colleagues Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. These things sometimes skip a generation, and today there seems to be some relationship between enthusiasm for Burroughs and the blank world of punk. Sullen young audiences attend his readings and appearances, relishing the foul humour of Doctor Benway as if it were fresh-minted, and bookshops report that it is the "rising" generation which is buying his indifferent new book *The Place of Dead Roads*.

It was, I think, Irving Howe who pointed out the qualities which Burroughs has in common with Céline and Genet. There is a sort of studied amorality; a fascination with crime (and especially with prison); a delight in being unmoved by violence. One of the nicest things a friend of Burroughs could find to say about him in a recent interview was that he would make an excellent prisoner in solitary confinement.

One contemporary version of punk is to be found among the cult known as "Survivalist" - unsimiling loners who are rehearsing for what they see as the coming Apocalypse. They store food, practise for combat and avoid the company of strangers. Burroughs, with his interest in gun-collecting and his boyish pride in marksmanship, makes a sort of talisman for this pessimistic and misanthropic tendency. It's certainly suggestive, in a macabre way, that he should now live in Lawrence, Kansas - the community whose annihilation is depicted in *The Day After*.

* * *

Erich Maria Remarque not only survived the worst thing that has yet happened this century, but escaped, came to America, won renown and fortune and married Paulette Goddard. Ms Goddard has now donated all of Remarque's diaries to the library of New York University. They consist of more than 1,000 pages, written in twenty-two compositions

books. One of them covers the years 1935-1954 and another 1964-1965. According to first reports, they contain character sketches which later appeared in Remarque's fiction and in his many screenplays.

Both Remarque and Goddard always denied that *Shadows in Paradise*, one of his last novels, was *non roman à clef*. But its subject matter, which has "Ross" as a refugee on forged papers and "Ntasha" as the fashion model who first befriended and then falls for him, is fairly unmistakable. There are also some biting scenes of Hollywood, where talented German Jewish émigrés scrounge for work on parts as SS men in cheap war films, which suggest that Remarque did not always love his adopted country or milieu.

Remarque arrived in the United States in 1939, commenting that it was "like getting some ground under your feet". He became a citizen in 1949 and married Paulette Goddard (by then divorced from Charlie Chaplin and Burgess Meredith) in 1958. It was not far from years that he revealed that he had been working for the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) on the problem of "re-educating" Germany after the war. He argued strongly that Allied propaganda should stress that Hitler was a disaster for Germany as well as for the Jews and other Europeans. Ms Goddard more than once told interviewers the story of Remarque's younger sister, who was beheaded by the Gestapo for saying that Germany would lose the war. The Gestapo sent Remarque a bill for ninety Deutschmarks costs of the execution.

As the girl who was described as "a tempestuous half-bred siren" for playing "Louvette" in *Northwest Mounted Police*, and who starred in such movies as *Poi O'Gold*, *Reap the Wild Wind* and *Nothing but the Truth* (not to speak of *Duffy's Tavern*) La Goddard must be the original for the studio darling in Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One*. A saucy colleen in one chapter, and a flashing-eyed prima donna in the next, she never really got a serious part. Being plipped by Vivien Leigh to play Scarlett O'Hara seems to have been the last straw and her gift of Remarque's diaries is the act for which she ought to be remembered.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

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Brenda Bolton is a lecturer in History at Westfield College, London.
Lord Briggs's most recent book, *A Social History of England*, was published last year.
Samuel Brittan's *The Role and Limits of Government* was published earlier this year.
Lord Carver's *War Since 1945* was published in 1980.
Richard Dawkins is the author of *The Extended Phenotype*, 1983.
Tom Disch's most recent book, *Burn This*, was published in 1982.
Philip Edwards is the author of *Threshold of a Nation: A Study in English and Irish Drama, 1979*.
M. R. D. Foot is co-author of *M19: Escape and Evasion, 1939-1945*, 1979.
A. J. Forey is a Reader in History at the University of Durham.
Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky: The years of ordeal 1850-1859* will be published shortly.
William George is a lecturer in Zoology at the University of Oxford.
Henry Gifford's books include *Tolstoy*, 1982.
Julie Hankey's theatre-historical edition of *Richard III*, was published in 1981.
Joel Harari is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.
Christopher Hitchens is Washington correspondent for the *Nation*.
Douglas Johnson is Professor of French History at University College London.
John Keep is Professor of Russian History at the University of Toronto.
Richard Lindley is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Bradford.
Nicholas Mann's *Petrarch* will appear later this year.
Ian McGeoch is a naval contributor to Peter-Kurt Würzbach's *Die Atom-Schwelle* heben.
W. H. Newton-Smith is Fairfax Fellow in Philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford.
Mark Ridley is Astor Junior Research Fellow of New College, Oxford.
Douglas Rimmer's *The Economies of West Africa* was published earlier this year.
Howard Robinson's *Matter and Sense: A critique of contemporary materialism* was published in 1982.
Anthony Sampson's books include *The Arms Bazaar*, 1977.
Edward M. Spiller's *Chemical Warfare* will be published later this year.
George Steiner's books include the novel, *The Portage to San Cristobal of A. H.*, 1981.
Hew Strachan's *European Armies and the Conduct of War* was published last year.
Jonathan Sumption is the author of *The Albigensian Crusade*, 1978.
Julian Symonds's *The Name of Anthony Lee* was published last year.
Philip Thody is a Professor of French Literature at the University of Leeds.
Philip Towle is the author of *Arms Control and East-West Relations*, 1983.
Roger Warren's *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Text and Performance* was published last year.
Richard Widdow is a lecturer in Indian Music at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Letters

The Rosenberg Case

Sir, - Michael Meeropol's letter (February 10) questions Hugh Brogan's reasoning, in his review of Radoah and Milton's book on the Rosenbergs, about the chain of evidence that led from Klaus Fuchs to the Rosenbergs. The following quotations from Kim Philby's *My Silent War* (1968) are not irrelevant to the issue (my references are to the Ballantine edition, New York, 1983).

Philby refers to his stay in Washington as being in "the era of Hiss, Coplon, Fuchs, Gold, Greenglass and the brave Rosenbergs - not to mention others who are still nameless" (p155). Like Brogan, Philby discusses the chain of discovery that led the authorities from Fuchs to Gold, and adds that "from Gold, who was also in a talkative mood, the chain led inexorably to the Rosenbergs, who were duly electrocuted" (p170). And finally, Philby says that "Fuchs was instrumental, through his confession, in uncovering the espionage ring in which he was involved with Harry Gold, David Greenglass, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg" (p182n).

Was Philby being careless? Or speaking from "the inside"? Or acting from some unfathomable motive? Should not this piece of testimony be at least introduced into the debate and seriously discussed?

IGOR KOPYTOFF,
675 rue Bloomfield, Montreal.

Judging Brecht

Sir, - In my haste to get off my reply to John Willett I missed the typing error in my letter (February 17). "S", of course, should have been "a". Had I seen a proof I would have caught it.

Willett's rejoinder is disingenuous. He cannot but know that "S" for "a" makes no sense of the words I quoted. His tortured exegesis of Brecht's remark is reminiscent of the respondent's defence against the charge that he damaged the kettle he had borrowed: he never borrowed it; it was already damaged when he borrowed it; it was his property anyhow.

Willett also ignores the evidence that Brecht made similar remarks to others, eg. Professor Henry Pachter (*New Leader*, April 28, 1969). James K. Lyon in his *Bertolt Brecht in America* (1980) reports that Brecht expressed sentiments of a like character to Viertel and Aufrecht (p294).

SIDNEY HOOK,
Hoover Institution, Stanford, California 94305.

Christian Belief

Sir, - Dennis Nineham, reviewing Robert Runcie's *Windows onto God* (February 24), seems surprised at the fact that the Archbishop "in one of his Easter sermons . . . insists dogmatically on the historicity of what is reported in the Gospels without so much as hinting that, or why, he parts company in the matter from a considerable scholarly consensus".

Surely the answer is obvious? The historicity of the Resurrection is the fundamental dogma of the Christian faith upon which the whole fabric rests, and if Dr Runcie did not hold it he ought not, in honesty, to continue as a Christian minister, still less as a bishop of Christ's Church. The academic refutation of unbelief is a part of episcopal responsibility, but not on Easter Day, when the preacher's task is to proclaim the glorious mystery. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins . . . But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep." St Paul's triumphant declaration is as fundamental for Christians today as it was for the Corinthian Church in the first century.

This is understood by the Eastern Orthodox Church, seen by Professor Nineham as "a real brake on healthy developments". Despite its failings (and I have been trying to come to terms with these for thirty years) - its complacency and self-satisfaction, its narrowness and not infrequent obscurantism - its glory is that it continues to maintain the central tenets of the faith, which alone make Christianity relevant and meaningful, and does not try to water them down to placate the spirit of the age. That is one reason why it is so bitterly hated by Russian Communism, which is well aware of the danger to itself of sincerity in an

enemy; for Orthodoxy does not admit the dishonest doctrine that a man can effectively renounce Christian belief while still remaining a teaching minister at the Church. It is this attitude, inherited from the superficial scepticism of the Enlightenment, which has been the disastrous legacy of so much Liberal Protestant thought. There is something distasteful in the spectacle of a man reciting the Creed in church and then denying what he has affirmed in the lecture room or in conversation with others. It is to Dr Runcie's credit that, although caught up in the machinery of the established Church of England, he rejects this particular form of intellectual dishonesty.

GERALD BONNER,
Department of Theology, University of Durham,
Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham.

T. S. Eliot

Sir, - From the recent correspondence in your columns, it does appear that there are a number of hitherto uncatalogued papers by T. S. Eliot; though these papers circulate amongst a select few, access and proper attribution does entail difficulty. For example, I have been sent in the post a section of a poem which is claimed to be by Eliot. I am told that it is part of a ninety-line poem by Eliot. The writer suggests the poem was written during the early years of the marriage between Tom Eliot and Vivienne Haigh Wood. And perhaps it is something I might like to quote from in my play *Tom and Viv*. Now, I had not heard of this poem before. I thought perhaps it was a section from a known piece, and later much altered; and there are examples of this. Or, it could be a poem which had been withdrawn from the works at some time; there are indeed examples of this, too. It could even be an extract from a poem by Vivienne Eliot, for there are instances of Tom and Viv using each other's lines in their work.

Now, myself and Max Stafford-Clark at the Royal Court Theatre would have liked to use this extract, if indeed it was by Tom or Viv. But how could we set about this? What avenue is there left open to us after we have already been denied so much access to Eliot papers? Where does this ninety-line poem come from? Why do a few appear to have read it or seen it? May I quote from it? Indeed, may I quote from the correspondent who originally sent me the piece and recalled a section from memory? If this poem is a collaboration between Tom and Viv whose is the copyright?

Dare I suggest that a catalogue of secrecy appears still to cloak study of Eliot?

MICHAEL HASTINGS,
2 Helix Gardens, London SW2.

Sir, - I was not trying to dismiss *The Waste Land* as Philip Edwards suggests (Letters, February 24). I said clearly that it was the poem's power that made it urgent that we knew the source and validity of its attitudes. C. H. Sisson (Letters, March 2) has also got it back to front in pretending that I said we need to know the private life before we can read the author. Indeed, it is the reverse; great works make us want to know more about their authors. I was merely suggesting that we should not mistake our authors for gods, not answerable for their attitudes, or their works for scripture, to read unquestioned. As Sisson very well knows, Eliot is not the only author who has pointed to some half-concealed sexual distress in Shakespeare's plays, nor is Freud (incidentally, and *pace* Sisson, I am sure many would agree with me that Freud is an unwholesome influence in the area we are discussing, that is, relationships with the feminine). Ted Hughes, in a brilliant essay introducing his *A Choice of Shakespeare's Verse*, says of Shakespeare, "And it so happened that his nature was such and the time was such and the place was such that this symbolic form of his nature - his deeply divided nature . . . appeared to him, when he exploited it for drama, as a problem - the posing of a chronic sexual dilemma, a highly dramatic and interesting collision of forces."

It is surely valuable to know the rules an author plays by, particularly if he is an author strong enough to influence our behaviour towards each other. It is the half-concealed truths that often operate on us most powerfully. Thus Marilyn French, in her *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*, also examines

Shakespeare's important female characters and concludes that they reduce either to the comradely, wooable and ultimately biddable future mother-of-your-children, or to the dangerous, uncontrollable death-witch; independently echoing Hughes's categories. Perhaps it is difficult for many Englishmen to see women in any other way, so forceful is Shakespeare's example. Is it not interesting and relevant that the inspirational feminine does not appear in our literature with the strength and immediacy that it manifests in, to quote Sisson's example, Dante? In an attempt to identify the source, validity and power of the negative feminine stereotypes, Penelope Shuttle and I have written *The Wise Wound* (1978), which, we hope, is to be reissued shortly with an additional long essay on the power of the "chronic sexual dilemma" that parallels Shakespeare's in such poets as Blake, Baudelaire, Rilke and Sylvia Plath.

PETER REDGROVE,
Falmouth, Cornwall.

Jaroslav Seifert

Sir, - May I correct two errors in Roger Scruton's sympathetic review of Jaroslav Seifert's poetry (February 24)?

Seifert broke with the Czech Communist Party in 1929 and not in 1919, when he was just eighteen years old and the party yet to be founded. And *Morany Sloup* (The Plague Column) has not only been translated (by Ewald Osers), it was published in London five years ago by Terra Nova Editions.

I would also take issue with the implication behind Scruton's statement in his last paragraph, which would seem to indicate that the Czechoslovak authorities banned Seifert for what he wrote. His status as *persona non grata* was much more due to what he *was* and is, to the brave stand against censorship and repression he took in the 1950s and then again, as President of the Writers' Union, after the Soviet invasion of 1968.

GEORGE THEINER,
39c Highbury Place, London N5.

Athenian Religion

Sir, - My review (March 2) of Jon D. Mikalson's *Athenian Popular Religion* was altered and truncated after I had seen the proof, in such a way as to leave my argument incomplete. The review should have ended as follows:

"Greek traditional tales ventured into alarming areas of cultural contradiction and ambiguity, areas with which the Athenian speech-writers were, in their professional capacities, evidently unconcerned. But we should not copy their indifference. Relating Greek myths to the practicalities of everyday behaviour has not often been done with success, but it is (as shown by J. Gould's pioneering paper in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1980) a fruitful topic for research. Those who pursue it in the future will do well to temper their imagination with Mikalson's common sense."

RICHARD BUXTON,
Department of Classics and Archaeology, University of Bristol, Queens Road, Bristol.

We apologize for a printing error which distorted the sense of part of Jennifer Hornsby's review of John R. Searle's *Intentionality* in last week's issue. The third paragraph of the review should have begun: "Is there not a problem here? If we use Searle's analogies to cast light on the mind from the direction of language, but at the same time take Searle's view of the priorities, then we seem to be left with the question of what it is for there to be intentional mental phenomena in the first place."

The 11th Annual Conference of the UK Association for Legal and Social Philosophy will be held at University College London from April 6 to 8, on the theme of Discrimination and Equality. The Austin Lecture will be given by Amartya Sen on "Rights as Goals". There will be symposia on Justice and Discrimination; Procedural Equality; Reverse Discrimination; and Changing Notions of Discrimination. Further details can be obtained from Stephen Guest, Faculty of Laws, University College London, 4-8 Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1H 0EO.

Books from Oxford: History

Labour in Power, 1945-1951

Kenneth O. Morgan

This major study provides a uniquely detailed and comprehensive account of the policies, programmes, and personalities of the Attlee government. It draws not only on the vast range of unpublished material from the period, but also on numerous personal papers as well as recently released public records. Illustrated £15 Clarendon Press

The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud

Volume 1: Education of the Senses

Peter Gay

The aim of this five-volume study is to reinterpret history on psychoanalytical lines, focusing on the role that sexuality, aggression, and conflict played in the attitudes and behaviour of the people we call Victorians. Volume 1 is concerned with their discovery of sexuality, what they knew and what they repressed, and how outside pressures and realities impinged on their erotic lives. Illustrated £18.50 Publication 15 March

The History of the British Coal Industry

Volume 2: 1700-1830, The Industrial Revolution

Michael W. Flinn

This comprehensive study of British coal-mining is based throughout on an extensive scrutiny of colliery records. A major section of the book is devoted to the social history of miners, and a final chapter offers some conclusions about the role of the coal industry in the country's economy during the formative years of Britain's industrial development. This volume is the first of five to be published. Illustrated £35 Clarendon Press

The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century

Edward Norman

This first full-scale account of the English Catholic Church in modern times, describes the issues and personalities at the heart of Catholic affairs in a period when emigration, Irish immigration, and conversions radically changed the nature of the Church and its place in English society. £22.50 Clarendon Press

New in paperback

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Sir Robert Peel's Administration and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland 1841-1846

Donal A. Kerr

"...one of the outstanding contributions to Irish history in our generation." *Irish Times* Paperback £7.95 Oxford Historical Monographs Clarendon Press

The Religion of Protestants

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Patrick Collinson

"Unmistakably the work of a historian who has reflected on his subject for the better part of a working lifetime." *London Review of Books* Paperback £7.95 Clarendon Press

Oxford University Press

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فَكَفَّاهُ مِنْ الْهَدْيِ

PHAI DON

In with the Simla pinks

Robert Brain
BALRAJ KHANNA
Nation of Fools: Scenes from Indian Life
252pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
07181 23875.

Balraj Khanna's *Nation of Fools* is a pleasing sketch of Punjabi life in and around Chandigarh in the mid-1950s, when both the author and his "scallywag" hero were in their teens. The book may be fairly described as a novel in the traditional Indian picaresque manner: Omi Khatri, like another wayward character in Indian fiction - Jagan's son in R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* - is the spoilt and only son of an industrious confectioner. Omi gets into and out of a lot of scrapes while his dignified and forgiving father builds up his business, moves his family from a camp slum to the capital city and finds his son a profitable bride. Eventually Khatri senior's patience is rewarded: Omi's wild oats are sown and he obediently takes over his father's business and marries the station master's daughter, whom he never sees before the wedding. Omi fights with his friends, trunts his school-masters, steals from the till to go to the cinema, takes reckless rides in his father-in-law's motorized railway trolley, gate-crashes grand weddings for the sake of the delicious food, and joins a fast crowd of wealthy sons and daughters of the Punjab elite for more elegant and erotic pastimes. This crowd - known as the Simla pinks from their fresh complexions acquired at public schools in the hills - are mad for anything not Indian, adopting Anglicized names such as Sully and Betty and Sue; for a time Omi becomes Aimie. Omi's wildest prank occurs when he stumbles across a naked woman praying for children in front of a Devi

goddess. "God came into Omi" and he loses his virginity to a counterfeited spirit of the shrine. *Nation of Fools* is a funny, irreverent book. In the accepted picaresque manner, no judgments are made: Omi and his friends cast a casual eye on the marching Sikhs and Brahmins during the language riots, and take only a passing interest in the protests of unpaid Untouchables because the women in their rags show a good deal of breast. Yet although we are not pressed to delve into the issues of revolution, good and evil, wealth and poverty, Balraj Khanna has a sharp eye for the ironies of daily life and a keen ear for its language. Hindu religious concepts are dealt with at a domestic level; we see dreaded taboos lightly transgressed and pollution easily borne. A married couple eat together and indulge in erotic embraces; a family adapts to an indoor toilet - next to the kitchen! - in one of Le Corbusier's cement boxes, "only fit for pigeons"; Brahmin neighbours come across as tiresome, old-fashioned snobs; and Untouchable servants are fit prey for a well-heeled young man's lust. Exotic Hindu religion becomes as pragmatic as our Anglican way: Khatri senior moves off into the tree-clad hills to visit his guru each time his business hiccups, and he always comes back with the right commercial answers.

A likeable - even a lovable - first novel, *Nation of Fools* is written in a lively, unshackled English. Apart from the cool narrative, Khanna attempts to capture the nuance of many different kinds of speech - between school friends, between Simla pinks, between Punjabi-speakers, Punjabi-speakers speaking English and so on. He does this not only through a lavish use of translated idiom and untranslated Punjabi words (like the luscious-looking names of the Khatri confectionery) but also on almost indiscernible tilt in the dialogue.

Ghosts on the ward

Laura Marcus
WENDY LAW-YONE
The Coffin Tree
195pp. Cape. £8.50.
0224029630

The narrator-protagonist of Wendy Law-Yone's *The Coffin Tree*, arriving in America at the age of twenty after a childhood spent in the "small, bypassed land" of Burma, finds that her former world is so little transferable that she cannot even pass judgment on the new. Her family, with the exception of her older half-brother Shan, have remained behind to face the aftermath of the Burmese military coup. Living in squalid digs, brother and sister, friendless and soon penniless, retreat into their private worlds. Shan, caught in a past he reconstructs as idyllic, becomes prey to paranoid fears and fantasies, and dies within a few years of their arrival. His sister, in near-total isolation, cut off from past and future, attempts suicide and is sent to a mental institution. There the dreams and memories she allows to re-enter her imagination enable her to forge links between past life and present, and to come to some kind of reconciliation with existence. If this sounds unbearably depressing, it should be said that the novel sparks into life in the sections describing Burma: stories told to the narrator by her brother of village and jungle encounters with mythical beings, half-woman and half-snake; her own memories of her terrifying, grandmotherly, convent education in a Buddhist country; her meeting with the opium-crazed fortune-teller who tells her of the rare coffin tree which is to become her brother's *ultima thule* when he leaves Burma. In hospital, she attempts to negotiate the difficult distinction between fantasies as gilding fictions and as the products of madness and interpolated memories and legends of Burma gain power by contrast with the less happily ritualized life of the mental ward. In the latter part of the novel the author's real energies are engaged with the effects of family relationships on her protagonists' later struggles. The narrator says of the institution: "Our fathers! Their ghosts hovered around us in that ward. I was part of that little community

of wronged children." Her own father, absent for much of her childhood, the powerful and at times brutal general of the rebel army in Burma, froze responses as effectively as the snow that in this novel seems to permanently cover America. The family as the cause of psychic conflict enters the scene again. Taken together with the themes of cultural denigration and political crisis, the narrator's problems can be seen to seem a little overdetermined.

By contrast, the narrator herself is something of a transparency, at no point named and difficult to envisage. The solipsism of this "I" contributes to the impression that *The Coffin Tree* has too much of the feel and structure of an autobiography; the density of the specific moment is on occasions sacrificed to the necessity of charting the passing of time, while a certain flatness of tone prevails in the scenes describing life in America - as of anecdotes too often repeated. Elsewhere in the novel there is writing of considerable force. Childhood fears and perceptions are given the immediacy of dreams: "Inside the Church of St Teresa, the priest leading us through our first communion performed his own brand of black magic, heartily swirling the blood of Christ in the shiny goblet, downing it with relish, and wiping his stained lips with a crisp napkin, as after a robust meal." This world, both black and brightly coloured, provides the basis for a compelling first novel.

March is designated a "literary month" at the Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, Hammer-smith, London W6, and events taking place there are to include: on Sunday March 11 at 4pm, Professor Richard Ellmann speaking on his biography of James Joyce, the revised and enlarged edition of which was published in 1982 (and reviewed in the TLS for December 17 of that year); on March 11 at 7.30pm, "Three Times Three", a workshop performance of a new play by Edmund White, which will have its world premiere at the Riverside; on Thursday March 15 at 7.30pm, *Nutcracker* Shange reading from her novel *Sassafras*, *Cypress* and *Indigo*; on Saturday March 17 at 8.00pm, Norman Thomas di Giovanni, the translator of Jorge Luis Borges, talking about Borges's work; and on Sunday March 18 at 4.30pm, Margaret Atwood reading from her new book *Margaret Atwood's*.

Denver Airport

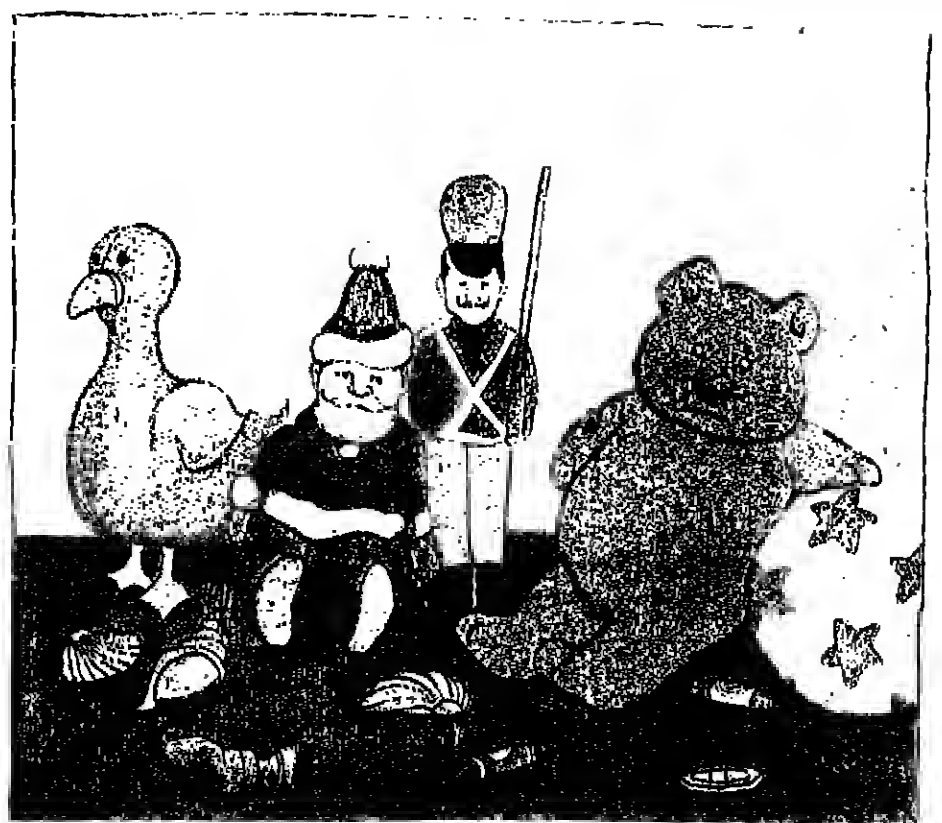
If we appear at such moments a nation
Of maniacs locked into fantasies all
As wacky as the born-again's hope
Of literally living after he's dead.
Perhaps it is useful. Perhaps
That paraplegic cowboy in the wheelchair
Simulating violence in the penny arcade
Is a kind of warning salvo to enemy hombres.
A skull-and-crossbones lovingly embroidered
On a sleeveless Levi jacket with, below it,
Our boys' motto, "More Berserk Than Thou."
Such silliness is threatening,
Such willingness to pump adrenalin
Down the exhausted wells to force
Some last ounce of authentic energy
Up to the crazed surface of the eye.

And I, in my whitewashed shoes, am I
Less dangerous than other businessmen
Along this concourse? Are my desires
Less disorganized, my heart more sane?
Of course not: we're all monsters
Together, whose every smile reveals
A possible vampire. For now, however,
I'm content to feed my lazy id
Its daily ration of news as it oozes
From the airport's perpetual TV. No need
To turn to that girl seducing
Guileless travellers on behalf
Of her hindoo god, no need to sign on
As a mercenary in the army of conscious
Reaction, no need to plunder, rape, or murder
When I'm so well-supplied at every viewing
With the methadone of my vicarious crimes.
Why, only last night a man confessed
To a spree of no less than thirty
Killings, and when the amorous
Newscaster asked what warning he offered
The youth of the nation, he solemnly replied:
"Don't drink, Don't smoke pot."

Another drink at the Timberline.
My plane's delayed an hour. The gin
Unlocks a benign tolerance for this land
Of languid, licensed water sprinklers,
For the brave rickety vans of teenagers
Going up one side of the continental divide
And down, like the fabled bear, the other.
It's all here to be applauded:
The purple majesty, the fruited plain,
The safe, soft air-conditioned bar.
Truly, I worry unduly. Most lunatics
Will accept a polite no-thank-you
In reply to their offer of a free LP.
Just as an umbrella suffices for most forms
Of storms. Tornadoes do happen, of course,
And the only answer's to get on your horse
And skidaddle eastward with a final fond
Ya-hoo! to the waitress who has been so kind.

TOM DISCH

"Denver Airport" is included in Tom Disch's new volume *Here I Am, There you are, Where were we, which is published this week and is a Poetry Book Society Choice. The book will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS.*



Peabody the bear, back among the toys, without his specialness and with a cobweb. One of Rosemary Wells's illustrations to her new picture book, *Peabody* (Macmillan, £5.95, 0333 36275 6), which tells the classic story of the old toy neglected for the new. Peabody's obvious niceness ensures a happy ending.

Mechanical minds

Sarah Wintle
PETER NICKL and BINETTE SCHROEDER
Rat-a-tam: The strange story of a little engine
Translated by Michael Bullock.
Cape. £4.95.
0224009745
JENNY WAGNER and JEFF FISHER
The Machine at the Heart of the World
Kestrel. £5.95.
07226 6482 6

Machines are the central characters of both these books, although they are each in their separate ways concerned also with ultimate values, the spiritual desolation of the adult world of industry, commerce and science, God, and other important questions. Consequently the picture of the ideal reader oscillates uncertainly between a five to eight-year-old with a fine intuitive grasp of the moral life, and anyone grown up and literate. It is, however, perhaps those over thirty-five or so who will be able to respond most fully to the evocative title *Rat-a-tam*. The continuing popularity of the steam engine in children's books is witness not only to parental and authorial nostalgia, but also to an uncertainty about what kind of relationship we should establish between our children and our technology. The little engine of Nickl and Schroeder's book is the hero of a semi-allegorical romance. Its adventures take it (the neuter pronoun is the book's) from a townscape dominated by factory chimneys, puffs of smoke and ill-tempered industrialists to a pure-white mountain-festness "inhabited by little people with friendly faces". The designer and builder of the little engine, Matthew Tiny, looks at first as if he will establish links with the scientific world for he is "very very clever. He solved the most difficult arithmetic problems with his left hand, and at the same time he built the most extraordinary things with his right." However, when his engine is appropriated as a garden ornament by the factory owner, Tiny decamps. His engine breaks out of its garden prison, traverses mountains and "a wide wilderness", sojourns for a time in a black city where it works "in the depths of the earth" digging "black gold", until it is black itself. It escapes, is pursued by "enormous black engines" until "a terrible storm of rain" washes it white again, so it can slip its pursuers to be re-united in a snowy village with the beloved Matthew Tiny. The real strength of this book lies in its evocative illustrations. The writing never quite matches its stark use of romance: romance and a whiff of Toy-town. But Binette Schroeder has used hints of de Chirico, Mag-

ritte, Dali and even Bosch to create a series of haunting, even frightening images which express beautifully the implications of the story. The industrialist's garden is a de Chirico-like place of moonlight and disturbing off-centre perspectives, while the demonic black engines burst out of a flat landscape so patterned by cooling towers and wind-blown smoke that it is frighteningly obvious that one more engine is hidden behind a tower and others still lurk off the page. The plot, however, with its journey from city to mountain valley is a regressive denial of any steam engine's origins. The same anxiety about machines is obvious in Jenny Wagner's *The Machine at the Heart of the World* which is a fable about the direct link between innocent childish directness and cosmic order. The machine, which is run by a shabby and slightly capricious character called Theobald, is a combination of a bicycle and medieval astronomical clock. The story is told in a portentous manner which risks coy obscurity but aims at being deeply suggestive. When "the boy" discovers the existence of the machine, adults quickly take it over to ensure fulfilment of their every selfish wish. Chaos ensues which scientists make worse. It's "the boy" who gets Theobald out of his bed and pedalling again.

The illustrations are pretty and hint at depth: an adult character is dressed as Napoleon and the resumption of order is signalled by a rainbow. The whole, with its rather irritating pretentiousness remains unfocused. None the less the book does offer a simple mechanistic explanation of the functioning of the universe in contrast to the abstractions children are usually given.

The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford has announced that it will be holding an exhibition of original illustrations from children's books which will take place from June 24 to July 29. The exhibition will bring together the work of over sixty artists currently working in children's books. Proceeds from the exhibition and from the sale of original artwork and the catalogue will go to the NSPCC Centenary Appeal. Further information can be obtained from Rona Treglown, Museum of Modern Art, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford.

Church Farm House Museum, Heodon is currently holding an exhibition of nineteenth and twentieth-century illustrated children's books from a local private collection made by Rosalind Berwald. The exhibition, which covers the work of artists from Arthur Rackham to Nicola Bayley, will run until March 25. Further information is available from D. A. Ruddon, Church Farm House Museum, Greyhound Hill, Hendon, London NW4 4JR.

In the wilds

Geoffrey Trease
VICTOR KELLEHER
Papio
A Novel of Adventure.
176pp. Kestrel. £6.95.
07226 5897 4
ELIZABETH GEORGE SPEARE
The Sign of the Beaver
135pp. Gollancz. £5.95.
0575 03418 1

Both these stories deal with the time-honoured situation of civilized children having to fend for themselves in a primitive environment. Victor Kelleher, himself Australian, lays his scene in Central Africa with a vividness that suggests familiarity. In choosing as his theme experiments on animals he has found one that excites a deep emotional reaction in young people and he leaves no doubt of his own intense commitment. There may be a little more calculated market-study in his pairing off as main characters a white boy and a black girl. The inter-relationship to be his American schoolfellow to make their friendship more plausible.

The two fourteen-year-olds, David and Jen, are removed by the misery of two baboons. Papio and Upi, at the local research-station. Letting them out during the night, they drive them by Land Rover to a suitably isolated spot and set them free - only to find to their embarrassment that the affectionate animals refuse to desert them. In the days, and eventually weeks, that follow, the conscientious teenagers have to traipse about the Zambesi escarpment, first helping the fugitives to attain social acceptance by a troop of wild fellow-baboons, and then (as

white hunters threaten the whole group) taking responsibility for their safety as well.

It is an original, often exciting story, flawed only by this basic improbability. Mr Kelleher tries hard to explain the children's behaviour, which hardens into positive misanthropy when they behave abominably to harmless African villagers. He makes David, the unhappy child of a broken marriage, seek in the baboon colony the "family" he has lost, while Jen by contrast is an over-strained elder sister reacting against an excess of home life. The children sometimes converse in non-colloquial adult terms, like "They'll never again be exposed to that sort of pointless cruelty." I found them far less credible than Mr Kelleher's baboons.

More traditional attitudes are reflected in *The Sign of the Beaver*, with which Elizabeth George Speare, a New England writer whose uneven reputation rests on a very small output, breaks silence after twenty years. Now we are in isolated Indian country, the woods of Maine in 1768. Young Matt is left alone in a new-built cabin while his father goes back to fetch the family from Massachusetts. The expected six-weeks absence lengthens into months. Matt survives only through the (at first reluctant) friendship of an Indian boy.

Mrs Speare, an authority on early colonial life, tells a competent if conventional story which is interesting and convincing (though it is surprising to find even the Indian girls with some knowledge of English). The contrast of cultures is made effectively and sympathetically. And with a refreshing disregard of ideological critics who might hint darkly of sexist attitudes, Mrs Speare happily allows her Indian boy to speak disparagingly of "squaw's work" - as of course he would.

Amiable eccentrics

Pat Raine
JUDITH O'NEILL
Jess and the River Kids
19pp. Hamish Hamilton. £5.50.
0241 1183 8

Jess, a thirteen-year-old Australian, does a lot of messing about on the banks of a river ("I'm never tired of looking at it"). Here, on a hot January day in 1943, she meets a couple of sturdy brothers, younger than herself, and establishes a kind of friendship with them. Their unsatisfactory parents have left Kenny and Snowy in the charge of an old English-woman called Lizzie, who lives on a bouse-boat. To this unorthodox dwelling-place Jess becomes an enthusiastic Sunday visitor. She is soon captivated by old Lizzie, who is deaf, and who talks loudly about her childhood in the north of England.

Jess sits enthralled, mousing questions at old Lizzie, rather to the annoyance of the boys who are obliged to remind her that she is their guest: "We want you to play with us." A compromise is reached, with Jess spending half the

afternoon with Lizzie, and the other half constructing "a very secret hut" with Kenny and Snowy. One day, a lot of rough boys on bicycles stop Jess on her way home and advise her to steer clear of the river: "You'd better look out, kid, or you'll be in trouble." Trouble ensues, sure enough, with Lizzie's houseboat set on fire, and set adrift, and Lizzie herself obliged to take a midnight swim in her long flannel nightdress. A gold nugget, fashioned into a brooch, the boys' only valuable possession, disappears into the bargain and causes some consternation before it is recovered.

None of this is very exciting, oddly enough. Banality quickly overtakes the descriptions of life in an Australian country town ("The block-les were all in town for their Saturday shopping..."), the narrative tone remains cosy throughout and the events are not fashioned to grip the imagination. Truly, we can't comprehend deaf Lizzie's fascination. It is plain that she's meant to be an amiably eccentric individual, but the portrait isn't sufficiently sharp to make her memorable or even convincing. As for the rest of them - well, by and large they're as lifeless as the palm trees painted at school by the inartistic Jess.

Rapscallion Jones

The hero of James Marshall's new picture book is a rakish fox with ambitions to be a writer...

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Models of descent

Nicholas Mann

R. HOWARD BLOCH
Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary
Anthropology of the French Middle Ages
282pp. University of Chicago Press. £24.65.
023605981 2

In the sixty-five years which have elapsed since the first appearance of Johan Huizinga's *Waning of the Middle Ages*, there has been no systematic attempt to rewrite the cultural history of medieval France. This is not so much because Huizinga was right (however brilliant his synthesis) as because the task has become progressively more daunting as the growth of material to be encompassed is matched by the proliferation of new disciplines demanding to be taken into account. Despite a subtitle which suggests a more modest design ("A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages"), by which one should understand the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), R. Howard Bloch's study is a genuinely interdisciplinary one, bringing together elements of history, ethnology, philology, philosophy, economics and literature, with the undoubted ambition of generating a new synthesis which will enable us to read the Middle Ages in a different light.

Since Lévi-Strauss, the concept of difference, or "alterity", has become central for the anthropologist, and accordingly it is an essential tenet of Bloch's approach to his subject. At the same time, however, his book will itself undoubtedly possess a certain alterity for many medievalists on this side of the Atlantic, who will be intrigued to learn that the prophet Merlin "embodies the possibility of an anthropology of difference, as outlined by Lévi-Strauss, combined with a grammatical reflection upon the role of language (and of the subject) within such an undertaking, as articulated by Derrida". Nor will they be reassured by what at times appears an almost gratuitous display of interdisciplinary knowledge in the introduction. That philology may be no more than the "initiator voyage of the medievalist" is clear enough, but that Lounsbury's enigmatic formula expressing the essence of Pavnee kinship is germane to the understanding of medieval France is not. The alterity is linguistic: too, Bloch is an adept of the curiously Gallic hermeneutics of the new scholars who, like their medieval forebears, have forged a privileged exegetical jargon in which problematizing and fetishizing vie with adequation and imbrication in their zeal to blind the uninitiated with science.

But such unfashionable (not to say old-fashioned) objections, and minor shortcomings such as the occasional mistranslation of Old French texts and the systematic trans-

formation of Alberic of Monte Cassino into Albert, should not be allowed to obscure the fundamental alterity of Bloch's book: its originality as synthesis. Freed of Huizinga's Hegelian yearning for a spirit of the age, the anthropologist in Bloch is never the less concerned to grasp the alien world of the Middle Ages in its entirety, to study the relation between the various orders of knowledge which it displays, and to deduce from them its innermost laws. Furthermore, the *littérateur* in him has recognized, as Huizinga never did, the essential polyvalence of the literary text, and its role not merely as a reflection of the society which produced it, but as a force for change within that society.

Stated simply, and in terms which do justice neither to the density nor to the subtlety of his argument, Bloch's thesis is this: that medieval society perceived itself in terms of a vertical model of descent from origins. This model is articulated etymologically in medieval theories of grammar and language, and is consequently reflected in historical and theological writings: it is also latent in the genealogical structure of the aristocratic family as it began to be organized in France in the twelfth century, and is made manifest in such systems of signs as heraldry and the adoption of patronyms. There is, however, no ideal point of convergence, no theoretical text which reveals the laws of language at work on those of kinship, even if representations of the Tree of Jesse serve as a single (and not wholly satisfactory) image of their coincidence in the arts. Consequently, Bloch turns to the "cultural superstructure", works of literature moulded by grammar, to explore the ways in which they mediate what he sees as the key linear concepts of genealogy and etymology.

While the *chansons de geste* epitomize the genealogical model in an almost impersonal way, emphasizing descent, property and continuation, the love-lyric of the Troubadours is seen as radically disrupting this model, both linguistically and in terms of the conception of the individual which it implies, just as the advent of nominalism and modal grammar disrupts the etymological theories of earlier writers, and the development of the "horizontal" household (itself threatened by the adulterous resonances of the lyric) runs counter to the "vertical" notion of lineage. It is finally the romance, or rather a remarkable hybrid labelled the "courtly novel", encompassing in addition to romances texts as diverse as the life of St Alexis, the *l'Amour de Marie de France* and *Ancient sin et Nicolette*, which is seen as mediating between the various tensions, constantly balancing the ideals of filial and narrative continuity against the possibility of their interruption.

One of the two reasons why Bloch considers the Middle Ages so relevant to the modern

world is their concern with the individual; in underlying thesis of his study is that whereas the *chansons de geste* excludes "interiority", the lyric develops and encourages it, and the romance serves "as a guide-hook for integrating the hidden self into the public sphere". This is not essentially a new conclusion, though some of the methods by which it is reached undoubtedly are: the conventional borders between most realms of human experience are radically reappraised. So much so indeed that, despite some close analysis in the manner of Paul Zumthor, it is a little disappointing to detect an almost old-fashioned attitude towards genres, which culminates in the creation of an entirely new one. For the chimeric "courtly novel" there can be no justification other than that it is a convenient label with which to unite disparate texts. And it is disappointing too to find exceptional and peculiar texts (such as that of Andreas Capellanus) being quoted as if they were typical and exemplary. To this degree, Bloch's recourse to literature is still that of the historical user rather than the critical reader.

But there is also a great deal of illuminating close reading, inspired by the belief that the other reason why the Middle Ages commend themselves to our attention today is for their intense concern with language. Yet it is symp-

In their spare time

Brenda Bolton

TERESA McLEAN
The English at Play in the Middle Ages
216pp. Kensal Press, Shooter's Lodge,
Windsor Forest, Berkshire, SL4 4SY.
0946041 067

Those who have read Teresa McLean's historical account of *Medieval English Gardens* will turn eagerly to her new book, *The English at Play*. They may well be disappointed if they expect to find the same scholarly approach as in her earlier book: there is no hint here of any bibliography, hardly a reference in sight and we must be satisfied with a perfunctory three-page index. But if one can tolerate such irritations one will learn much about the sporting and other activities with which medieval people filled their leisure, even when they had little of it to speak of.

The book covers all possible aspects of entertainment and sport, from the Anglo-Saxons to the Court of Henry VIII, and records much violence, both on and off the pitch. Medieval spectatorship indeed seems to have been so enthusiastic that it often constituted a secondary participation. Most medieval sports appear as a recreational form of gang warfare,

tomantic of his approach that Bloch should point out that already in the thirteenth century, linguistics was "an aggressive, even imperialistic science generative of its own arguments—a dynamic model capable of integrating any of its constituent parts". One almost has the impression on occasions that he is falling into that sin of excessive emphasis on words which St Augustine condemns as a pitiful servitude, employing a process akin to *inimonia* in place of argument, pursuing the words of the texts to the limits of their etymologies.

It remains to be seen whether etymology and genealogy are true keys to the past, and not merely brief candles, brightly illuminating the medieval scene. There is some danger that, like the love-lyric, "fornicating with language", this book may so disrupt the norms of literary lineage as to preclude the possibility of any progeny. But it is an ingenious and compelling synthesis which no medievalist, even on this side of the Atlantic, can afford to ignore. Like the prophet Merlin, who opens and closes his study, Bloch is at once writer, trickster and go-between, skillfully manipulating his "totalizing regard" as he moves from discipline to discipline and from theory to text, not above legerdemain and the occasional violence, but always (nearly) aware of the polyvalence of his words.

carried out on wide open spaces between rival local communities—or even institutionalized within the boundary walls of churchyards as congregations emerged from Mass. Crowd hooliganism or bloodthirsty interruptions might easily alter the course of play or affect the outcome of the match. Early forms of football seem to have had a reputation of being peculiarly lethal. Death was frequent through heavy tackling but deliberate, cold-blooded murder, such as that recorded in Cheshire in 1321, when two brothers stood accused of using their victim's head as the ball, was happily rarer.

Freezing winters produced a varied range of ice sports. Skating with bones shaped and smoothed to fit under shoes is described by the twelfth-century chronicler, William Fitzstephen, and is also known to us through archaeological finds. Wrestling, that "foul and unthrifty occupation", was enjoyed quite as much as the traditional sport of archery, which might be pursued either formally at the butts or standard practice-grounds or, more popularly, by "roving", which involved the use of random targets over any distance.

The English love of the horse was early apparent in the treatment of palfreys, the best saddle horses: Henry III in 1232 spared no expense to "cure the royal palfrey dying at Harrow." Choice of colour was equally of great importance, grey being the most fashionable and as many as five different shades being distinguished. Such sports as cock-fighting and bear-baiting or bull-running were also enjoyed to the full. Kings could afford to set up menageries and imported rare and exotic animals to their parks and castle grounds. Henry III, whose interests ranged from leopards and bears to the famous elephant which lived inside the Tower of London from 1255 until its untimely death a year or two later, had bad luck with most of his rarer animals, whose lives in captivity appear to have been brief. At the other end of the scale were domestic pets, such as the "one humble, self-effacing little dog unlikely to yelp or caper" allowed by Archbishop Peckham to senior nuns, or the cat considered suitable to keep recalcitrant company in the thirteenth century.

Teresa McLean is at her best in the second half of the book, where she deals with hunting, hawking, tournaments and with the apparently more restful pastimes of board-games, gardening, singing and folk games and, above all, with medieval drama. Here she is far more in control of the material and presents it in an interesting and vivid manner. She is not content with the sociological or psychological aspects of sport: the book does not tell us why it only describes how. It is more for those interested in sport for its own sake than for those who want to understand the medieval society in which it was played.

Unfamiliar affections

Julie Hankey

STANLEY WELLS (Editor)
Shakespeare Survey: An annual Survey of
Shakespearean study and production
203pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50.
052125363 4

An article by Susan Snyder in this issue of *Shakespeare Survey* quotes Auden's elegy on Yeats as a description of Shakespeare's own fate: "Now scattered among a hundred cities / And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections", his words "modified in the guts of the living". It is a neat re-application, and many of the other articles here are concerned with it, in one way or another.

A group of scholars in one city, Cairo, has already modified (or restored) Shakespeare's name to Shayk al-Subair, in recognition of his extraordinary feeling for Arabia. Wole Soyinka, who reports this and other fascinating facts about Shakespeare in Arabia—for example the committee set up by the government of the United Arab Republic to translate his works—is reluctantly doubtful about the Shayk al-Subair idea. Reluctantly, because it feels uncannily right where *Antony and Cleopatra* is concerned. Orlando or Romeo, say, would immediately shock an Arabian or North African—publicizing their love as they do, with no thought of the girl's honour or her family's reputation, and one of them even hanging her name on the trees. But with Cleopatra it is another matter. To Egyptians it is like coming home. She speaks to them more particularly and more intimately than a European could possibly imagine.

Cleopatra's feeling for death as a house, as a physical place of abode ("Then is it sin / To rush into the secret house of death . . . ?") is more than figurative, says Soyinka. The ancient Osiric mysteries impart an actuality to the poetry, a sense of imminence which can, however, only be "fully absorbed by an Egyptian, or one steeped in the esoteric cults of Egypt and allied religions, including Islam". The interruptions of Caesar and the South-sayer notwithstanding, the whole last act, after Antony's death has virtually put an end to the historical matter of the play, is Shakespeare's induction into that nether world. The last tableau is on the verge of it, a preparatory not a

closing ritual, with Cleopatra dressed for arrival as much as for departure and the asp sucking its nurse to sleep in token of the union of life and death.

In support of his theme Soyinka draws upon classical Arabic poetry and the Islamic Book of the Dead. At the same time, he plays with the Shayk al-Subair idea, and in a parting gesture he nominates a certain Hanna Hathawa as his wife. But he is only half playing. He is deeply moved by the Shayk, not only in his understanding of the ancient cults but also in his instinct for the "moist land" of Egypt, and its equivalent erotic and emotional terrain within the chief protagonists.

It is an intriguing speculation that other cultures might offer a more direct route to Shakespeare than the culture of his own country 400 years on. Arabs, or, for the sake of change, Sicilians might find Othello's treatment of Desdemona far less of a problem than modern English audiences do. Lu Gu-Sun of Fudan University, Shanghai, describes in an article here the beginnings of Chinese interest in Shakespeare during the first decades of this century. *Hamlet*, apparently, was a favourite among young intellectuals at the time of the Chinese Revolution in 1911–12 "with his fiery protests against corruption and injustice". Others were more impressed with the simplicities of a king revenged, a usurper overthrown and a prince conducting himself according to the traditional code of filial piety and chastity—good Confucian that he was.

Admittedly that was three generations ago, and Lu Gu-Sun himself, believing ghosts and bloody murder to be out of date now, suggests that the emphasis in future *Hamlet* studies should be on the prince's social relations (or their absence) rather than on his metaphysical speculations. But reading Philip Edwards on "Tragic balance in *Hamlet*" one suspects that the old Chinese might have been fortunate in being out of date.

A lively sense of ghosts and bloody murder, of Heaven and Hell and everlasting damnation is just what we do need in order to understand *Hamlet*, says Edwards. Without them; especially during this agnostic and morally tolerant century, critical opinion in the West has drained all the tragedy from the play. *Hamlet*'s moral ferocity appears merely as an adolescent failure to see both sides of the question, and his achievement is only a leap of unnecessarily

First and second thoughts

Phillip Edwards

GARY TAYLOR and MICHAEL WARREN
(Editors)
The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's
Two Versions of 'King Lear'
489pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
01932924 6

Unlike Jonson or Massinger, Shakespeare did not see to the publication of his plays, and none of the early printed texts is fully authentic. Many of the plays exist in more than one early version, with marked differences between them; it has been the common assumption that where two or more versions of the text of a play exist, each can be used to help establish the true text, which may have become tarnished by many different agents of transmission, scribes, printers, composers and above all men of the theatre adapting and abbreviating the master's work for the stage. Recently, however, renewed attention has been paid to the possibility that Shakespeare, like a host of other dramatists, may have revised his own plays as they moved through rehearsal and into production, so that the existence of two versions of the same play may indicate authorial revision. I myself believe that some (by no means all) of the notable differences between the two good texts of *Hamlet* are arguably the result of Shakespeare making alterations to his play just before it went into production, thereby reshaping its central issues.

The textual problem of *King Lear* is even more vexed than that of *Hamlet*, though I think the essential features are remarkably similar. The Quarto text (1608) and the shorter Folio text (1623) can each lay exclusive claim to in-

disputably Shakespearean elements. Editorial tradition, clearly and ably described in the present volume by Stanley Wells and Steven Urkowitz, believing that each of the versions had an imperfect share of a common original, has conflated the two versions to produce the *King Lear* which we all know. For the last year or so Michael Warren, Steven Urkowitz, Gary Taylor and others have been arguing that there is no common original and that the two texts represent an early version and a later revision. Each version makes sense on its own and conflation is held to produce a play that Shakespeare never wrote. The present book is the manifesto of the anti-conflation school.

It is remarkable that some of the most famous phrases in *Lear* are to be found only in the later and shorter Folio text. These include the last line of the Fool, "And I'll go to bed at noon", the last line of Lear himself, "Look on her, look, her lips! Look there, look there!", as well as the central words of the crazed king, "None does offend, none, I say none". It is indeed hard to believe that the Folio does not contain some of Shakespeare's additions and second thoughts. But though I am sympathetic to the general idea of Shakespeare as a reviser, I remain unconvinced by the main thesis of this book, that the Folio text is a Shakespearean revision of his early version as given in the Quarto. The older theory still seems much more likely: that the Quarto is an imperfect rendering of Shakespeare's full text, and that the Folio is an often more true rendering, including some Shakespearean second thoughts and some passages lost from the Quarto of the play, shortened and adapted by someone other than Shakespeare.

The Division of the Kingdoms is an extremely long book, very detailed, and taxing to read,

dead bodies with Fortinbras the obvious winner. Edwards develops his argument very persuasively, though he sees more specifically religious fear in the "To be or not to be" soliloquy than I can. And I wonder whether, like Soyinka, he gives people less credit for imagination than they deserve—whether ordinary readers (as opposed to the critics) are as irreversibly modern as he fears.

The task of reconstituting Shakespeare while he is half way through some digestive process is pursued in a different area by Alan C. Dessen. His subject is the different sorts of textual cuts made by theatre directors, and the more or less obvious damage that these can cause. The last section of his article is especially useful in that it questions what usually goes unnoticed: small smoothings out of "awkward" stagings, or technical "improvements", such as real stage darkness. For example, Kent in *King Lear* is left in the stocks during Edgar's entrance and speech, even though Edgar does not appear to notice him. The custom is to black Kent out. But as Dessen points out, Shakespeare's staging makes visible the analogy between their situations. (It is just this sort of point that the reconstructed Globes in Detroit and on the South Bank in London will be able to test.)

But there will always be things left over that are open to choice, as the articles by Ralph Berry on Komisarjevsky and Ann Fridén on Ingmar Bergman remind one: like whether you put the two *Dromios* in *The Comedy of Errors* into pink bowler hats or not, and whether you have one of the witches in *Macbeth* dressed like a whore with a Lady Macbeth mask on, or not. Shakespeare didn't say. Komisarjevsky and Ingmar Bergman said yes to each, respectively.

Both Berry and Fridén give space simply to describing the Shakespeare productions of these directors, and their effect on the critics at the time, but Berry attempts more in trying to refurbish Komisarjevsky's reputation for being merely a gimmicky trickster insensible to Shakespeare's poetry (Eugenie Leontovich's rendering of "O wretched is the garland of the war" was once transcribed as "O wretched degenerate deva"). He succeeds in showing him to have been textually responsible (by the theatre standards of the time), and theatrically brilliant—though, after so many subsequent jolly japes, one groans inwardly at some of his jokey ideas and settings.



A plate from the Mutus Liber showing the final phase of the opus; the appearance of the four windows in the laboratory indicate completeness; the zodiacal sign of Libra appears in connection with the confection. It is reproduced from Prospero's Island: The secret alchemy at the heart of The Tempest by Noel Cobb (223pp. Corgi, 23 Chesnut Street, London SW1, £5.05, 0904575 268).

After the director's, there is one last phase of Shakespearean creativity: the writer's. Stoppard's *Hamlet*-plays (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Dog's Hamlet, Cuhoo's Macbeth*) have, as Jill L. Levenson shows, passed so far down the digestive tract that criticism involves identifying and appraising the influence of, say, Wittgenstein and Beckett as much as of Shakespeare. By contrast, Auden's Shakespeare in *The Sea and the Mirror* is more Auden than anything else. Susan Snyder explores the biographical and philosophical background to Auden's doubts about the seriousness of poetry ("poetry makes nothing happen"); and then goes lucidly through the poem.

There are as many more articles again, though not all of them are on the title theme. But as a theme it has proved fruitful, and makes for a wide-ranging and yet homogeneous issue.

Bishops in decline

A. J. Forey

PAUL H. FREEDMAN
The Diocese of Vic: Tradition and
Regeneration in Medieval Catalonia
230pp. Rutgers University Press. \$20.
08135 0970

The developments and changes taking place in frontier regions have attracted the attention of many historians of medieval Spain. By contrast, Paul H. Freedman seeks to show that there was also adaptation and innovation in a district which is seen as being, in the twelfth century, not only away from the frontier but also ignored and neglected by the rulers of Catalonia: the alliance and common interests which had existed between the bishop of Vic and the count of Barcelona up to 1100, and which had allowed the bishop to play an important role in Catalan affairs, are contrasted with the neglect shown in the twelfth century by both counts and kings.

Despite its title, the book is not primarily concerned with the internal affairs of the church. Freedman notes that Vic was little affected by reform movements in the twelfth century; a section on the cathedral chapter contains some interesting comments on its

recruitment and finances, but the local clergy are not discussed and little is said about religious houses within the diocese. The main theme is the relations between the church of Vic and lay society. Freedman examines the defence of episcopal rights in the city of Vic against encroachments by nobles and townsmen, as well as the bishop's control over castles within the diocese. In the twelfth century the bishop lost some rights, but managed to salvage a good deal, and was successful in thwarting an attempt to establish a consular regime in the city itself. As a means of settling disputes various forms of compromise were employed. In contrast to the earlier practice of judgment by professional judges, Freedman's treatment of these topics is clear, detailed and competent, and his conclusion that there was adaptation and innovation to meet changing circumstances, particularly in the settlement of disputes, is unexceptionable, if not altogether unexpected.

Yet one must have doubts about the framework in which the discussion is set. Conflicting statements are made about the date when Vic ceased altogether to be a frontier diocese, and the attitudes adopted by the counts of Barcelona and later kings of Aragon in the twelfth century require more convincing demonstration and explanation. It is difficult, for example, to discuss the bishop's

tic gesture the count's gift of the castle of Palomera, which was made shortly before the nearby city of Lleida fell to the Christians in 1149. Apart from any short-term consequences of a hypothetical breach between bishop Berenguer and Ramon Berenguer III in the closing years of the eleventh century, the explanations advanced for neglect in the twelfth century are that the rulers were then interested in the frontier regions, not Catalunya Vella, and that the bishops of the latter region were no longer of much importance to them: there had been changes in the foundations of comital power, and on the frontier other groups, including magnates and military orders, were of more significance. Yet some of the more westerly parts of the diocese of Vic were still march areas until the middle years of the twelfth century; no military order was of any importance in the *reconquista* until well into the 1140s; and despite changes in the nature of comital power, which had been taking place well before 1100, the bishop of Vic in the twelfth century still owed military and other obligations to the ruler of Catalonia. One would also normally expect the withdrawal of protection to be occasioned by something stronger than indifference, and a fuller explanation is needed of the revival of royal interest and concern which apparently occurred in the final years of the century.

book. There is a scornful reference to "the poet-critic Pope". Gary Taylor again, in a second article, explaining that the excision of the incident of Cornwall's servants has "an obvious dramatic value", says of this and other passages that they "consist, almost entirely, of explicit moral commentary by a variety of bystanders. Since most literary criticism also consists of explicit moral commentary by a variety of bystander, one can understand why we as critics have been so reluctant to admit that Shakespeare may have regarded such material as dispensable." Passing over the logic of this and its view of literary criticism, I feel that the difficulty about such a view of Shakespeare as a practical theatre man anxious to get buns on seats and not to bore the audience with moral commentary is that there is so much "explicit moral commentary" in Shakespeare, including *Macbeth*'s "Tomorrow and tomorrow" speech, that if we are going to start whittling it down like Goneril and Regan trying to whittle down Lear's followers we are going to end up with comic-strip Shakespeare.

It will be the greatest pity if the tone of advocacy in this book leads to Shakespeareans trooping like Big-Endians and Little-Endians into the Yes and No lobbies on the revision of *King Lear*. The question of revision in Shakespeare is interesting and at times has important implications. But we don't want to make a major doctrinal issue of the sanctity and the authority of both the *Lear* texts. There are a great many possible approaches and solutions to this extremely complex problem, as a number of the contributors to this book admit, in spite of its defiant title. For my part, I remain of the opinion that if Shakespeare is fully responsible for both versions, then the less Shakespearean he

Handwritten note in the right margin: "The Division of the Kingdoms is a very long book, very detailed, and taxing to read."

